



THE INDEPENDENT

N° 3252

IN THE TABLOID

MEDIA+

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THAT MASSIVE TORY DINNER PARTY - TONIGHT'S THE NIGHT

PLUS: 16 pages of media and marketing appointments



LILY JOINS THE INDEPENDENT

THE GIRL WHO HANDS OUT CHINESE TORTURE

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DANNY BAKER

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SPORTS
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MONDAY 24 MARCH 1997

WEATHER: Sunshine and showers

(IR45p) 40p

How to
save the
whale: a
hundred
people;
11 boats;
and a
posse of
camera
crews

Nicole Veash and
Michael Streeter

A second attempt to save Moby, the 40ft sperm whale stuck in the River Forth for five days, appeared to have failed last night after the animal became stranded in just six feet of water. The whale had been slowly heading towards the safety of the open sea when it became beached at Drumsand, near Cramond.

Rescuers were hoping that the 40-ton whale would be swept to safety by the turn of the tide at 8pm, but feared it was unlikely to reach open waters by this morning.

Charles Bickett, general manager of rescue co-ordinators Deep Sea World, said Moby had at least gone past the Forth bridges, despite his apparent aversion to the traffic noise. He said they would probably assess the situation later today and possibly start a fresh rescue attempt tomorrow.

A flotilla of 11 boats, watched by a growing media pack, was involved in yesterday's rescue attempt, including two tugs loaned by BP. They stayed upstream of the whale, making what organisers described as a "wall of sound" to force the animal out to sea and away from the risky shallows.

Four-year-old Moby was heading from the Arctic towards the Azores - a whale breeding ground - when he became disoriented, Alex Kilgour, the promotions manager at Deep Sea World, said: "They say there is no better place to have a heart attack than a hospital and Moby couldn't have chosen a better place to be stranded than outside an aquarium."

QUICKLY

Drug tolerance
British police's foremost expert on the international drugs trade said yesterday that trafficking could be stopped "virtually altogether" but the public chose instead to accept "tolerable" levels of drug abuse. Page 6

Student reform

A new survey of the lifestyles and spending habits of today's undergraduates uncovers a disturbing picture of sensible, highly organised young people equipped with mobile phones and personal computers and spurning a grand tradition of student debt. Page 3

Euro handover

Detailed plans for a single European policy on immigration and judicial matters and an end to internal border checks will be unveiled this week, opening the way for the biggest transfer of power to Brussels since the Maastricht Treaty. Page 11

Suicide bomb warning
As relations between Israel and the Palestinians deteriorate in the wake of the suicide bomb in Tel Aviv, the head of Israeli military intelligence said yesterday that he expected further suicide attacks. Page 10



Rescue mission: A ferry boat trying to guide the stranded whale out of the Firth of Forth yesterday. Experts believe its sonar sense may have become disoriented

Photograph: Jeff Mitchell/Reuters

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Labour's £2 billion plan to shut down hospitals

EXCLUSIVE

by Fran Abrams

Labour is drawing up plans for a programme of hospital closures to save £2bn which it wants to use for free dental checks, less rationing of treatment, and better salaries for doctors and nurses.

The programme would mean closing or merging hospitals in areas where similar facilities are offered on more than one site, but providing transport for patients to travel between towns for treatment and for relatives to travel for visits.

Although Labour believes its scheme could lead to large savings over a number of years for other projects, some experts said last night that the reduction in costs would be negligible.

Last night Labour's health spokesman, Chris Smith, confirmed that the party would try to save money by merging the managements of National Health Service trusts. No decisions would be made while

Labour was in opposition, he added, and the closure programme would have to be made on a case by case basis.

"In relation to the merger of trust hierarchies, I am sure there is scope for this without losing facilities by simply removing unnecessary streams of bureaucracy.

I think any sensible government is going to want to look at this sort of question. What we have strongly said is that we will be removing great swathes of bureaucracy from the system by our reforms of the internal market," he said.

Gordon Brown, the shadow Chancellor, has promised to meet the Conservatives' spending targets in the first year of a Labour government and to review the situation in the second year, but that leaves Mr Smith facing a very tight budget for his department.

In a television interview yesterday, Mr Brown said Labour

hoped to cut administrative costs in the health service from between 12 and 15 per cent to below 10 per cent. He also commended the action of Labour's spokesman on Scottish affairs, George Robertson, who has already told the NHS trusts running hospitals in Scotland to

He added that some of the savings generated by Labour's programme to get 250,000 young people off benefit and into work would be used to cut the budget deficit.

Some government officials are said to believe that hospital closures are now the only an-

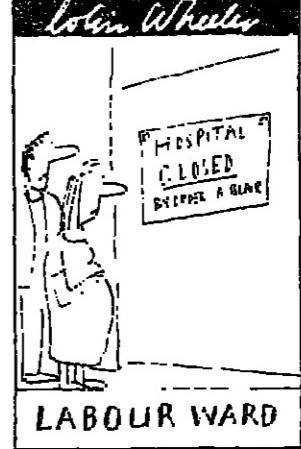
ever a proposal is made to remove a hospital or one of its facilities, a local public health hearing will be set up. If the party goes ahead with a large number of hospital closures, this system is likely to be tested to its limits.

Hospital closures are always controversial and are bound to cause public outrage wherever they are proposed.

Last night James Johnson chairman of the British Medical Association's consultants' committee, said that the revelation did not come as a surprise but that it would be bound to cause controversy.

"Politically, closing down hospitals is about the worst thing you can do short of becoming a self-confessed child molester," he said.

However, the Audit Com-



LABOUR WARD

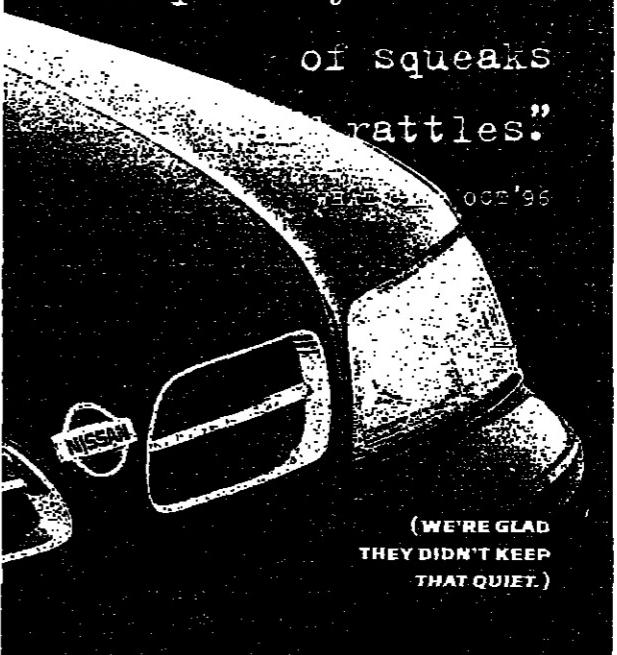
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mission had identified some 30 small hospitals where there was an argument for closure on the grounds that they could not deliver treatment of a high enough quality, he added.

He said the idea of providing transport services was a sound one, though in cases where accident and emergency departments were closed the extra ambulance costs were prohibitive.

Electon countdown, page 7

"I admire the way it's put together; I've never driven a car so completely devoid of squeaks and rattles."



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The strange case of Lady Thatcher and Her Majesty's coat of arms

Ben Summers and
Michael Streeter

While in power, critics often accused Margaret Thatcher of behaving as imperiously as any monarch.

Now, in a move which may cause mild irritation at Buckingham Palace, the former prime minister has gone one step further by ditching her own coat of arms - and adopting the Royal Arms as her official letterhead.

In recent weeks letters have been sent from her private office bearing the design which, in its fullest version, is for use by the Sovereign alone.

The coat of arms contains a central shield bearing the arms of England, Scotland and Ireland, surrounded by the garter, supported by a lion and unicorn. The motto *Dieu et mon droit* is below.

Though the Queen's personal version is fuller, there are



Up in arms: From left, the crests of the House of Lords, of Baroness Thatcher, and the Queen.

Lady Thatcher ditched her own arms and has adopted a logo similar to the royal one

understandable grounds for confusion as the shield, mottoes, unicorn and garter are common to both.

The form being used by Baroness Thatcher is that used by formal state bodies: secretaries and departments of state, and the Houses of Parliament, for example.

And, but for the substitution of the words Margaret Thatcher, it is also identical to that of

the office of 10 Downing Street - perhaps a sign that even after more than six years the baroness still finds it hard to adjust to non-prime ministerial life.

The normal House of Lords logo used by peers places the Arms inside an ellipse, together with the words "House of Lords", making clear the state body to which the use of the Royal Arms relates.

Many peers simply have their

Garter and not the Arms of the Sovereign," he said.

Of the head on her notepaper, he said: "Well, it's certainly the Royal Arms. All I can say is, I find it very odd. I can't think of any reason why they should be there."

Meanwhile, the ceremonial figure of Black Rod, asked if Lady Thatcher's use of the Royal Arms broke the rules, said: "Well, I'm... not making any comment on that at all."

The letterheads of other former prime ministers do not allude to their former status: Sir Edward Heath uses a simple House of Commons portcullis and a plain typeface, while Lord Callaghan simply types his name beside the House of Lords logo.

But Lady Thatcher's own rather quirky design, an unusual mixture of binoculars, weighing scales, and keys, seems to have been quietly dropped for grander things.

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Alarm as pilot is grounded on drink-fly allegation

A pilot who allegedly flew a plane while under the influence of alcohol is being investigated after being forced to land by alarmed air traffic controllers.

The 63-year-old pilot was escorted from the four-seater plane at Southampton airport after an erratic landing in which he was said to have swerved off the runway and almost hit a fence. The man refused to give a breath-test, police said, and was seen by a police surgeon who confirmed he had been drinking. His aircraft keys were confiscated and he was released pending an inquiry by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

The man, from Denham, Buckinghamshire, had been flying to Jersey when he strayed into London air space on Friday. Air-traffic controllers at Heathrow contacted the light aircraft but were concerned with the response they received from the pilot.

A CAA spokesman said the man could be charged with endangering aircraft or with endangering people on the ground.

Man found hanged in police cell

An investigation was launched yesterday after a man accused of rape was found hanging in a police cell.

Marlon Downes, 30, was found at 3am at Harlesden police station, north-west London. Police officers tried to resuscitate him and he was taken to the Central Middlesex Hospital, also in north-west London, where he was pronounced dead at 4am.

Mr Downes, from Harlesden, was arrested on Friday and was later charged with two counts of rape. He was due to appear before Brent magistrates' court today. The Police Complaints Authority will supervise the investigation into his death; a post mortem examination was due to be held yesterday.

Clamping down on the clamps

Motorists are often forced to pay £100 or more to have their wheelclamped cars released by unscrupulous private operators, the Automobile Association said yesterday.

These sums far exceed the £40 defined as a "reasonable fee" by the Court of Appeal in 1995, the AA added. Mike Watkins of AA legal services said the "massive hike in the release fees have underlined government failure to curb wheelclamp extortion".

Payments of £70 were the norm and demands of £100 or more were growing since the courts ruled, in November 1995, that clamping on private law was legal in England and Wales, he added.

The police are very reluctant to deal with aggressive and threatening wheelclampers and the Government has failed to build on the Court of Appeal ruling to regulate against excessive charges, he said. "The law offers no protection and the Government won't control wheelclamping, so motorists, including the disabled and elderly, continue to suffer intimidation and extortion."

E. coli warning for Scotland

The man heading the inquiry into Britain's worst *E. coli* outbreak warned yesterday that there could be an increase in the number of cases in Scotland this year.

Professor Hugh Pennington said it did not bode well that there had been so many outbreaks during the winter.

The professor (left) is leading the government inquiry into the Lanarkshire *E. coli* outbreak which claimed the lives of 18 people at the end of last year. Since then, there have been smaller *E. coli* scares in Arbroath and in the Scottish Borders area which, he said, had surprised him. "It is a quiet time of year for *E. coli* normally. It goes into a kind of hibernation in winter. It hasn't done this year." He added: "I think one has to plan on the assumption that it might get even a bit more common in the next year or two." The professor was talking in advance of his speech on *E. coli* to the Edinburgh International Science Festival.

Women think twice about 'Ms'

Women are considering ditching the title 'Ms' because it is outdated and alienates men, it emerged yesterday.

Some younger women think it should be replaced by "Miss" for all women, married or single. A motion proposing the change will be debated at the annual conference of Business and Professional Women UK Ltd in Bristol next month. One of the women putting forward the motion, Anne Freeman, an information technology manager from Dunstable, Bedfordshire, said that "Ms" tended to be linked with aggressiveness by some male employers. However, Marcelle D'Argy Smith, former editor of *Cosmopolitan* magazine, said: "To say 'Ms' offends men just typifies the toe-curling apathy of women and the dormouse servitude to men."

Rita Bangla, general secretary for the women's organisation, stressed that the motion had not yet been accepted by its board or membership, and would 'disappear' if it did not find favour.

Horse-owner loses £1m in jewels

A stolen jewellery collection valued at more than £1m belongs to the Lebanese racehorse owner, Fathi Kalla, police said yesterday.

Mr Kalla, whose horse, Corrupt, was a favourite in the 1991 Derby, declined publicity to help retrieve the gems for fear of becoming the target of yet another raid. The jewellery had been removed from a safe box and brought to the house for the engagement party of Mr Kalla's eldest daughter, which will go ahead next Thursday, police said. The jewels were not insured.

Outrage over fishy business

A 30-year-old angler caused a wave of protest during a fishing competition after going into battle with a secret weapon - a hi-tech echo sounder that helps to find fish.

Roger Mortimer used the £325 sonar device in a fishing competition on the River Glen near Spalding, Lincolnshire. His rivals claim that the device gave him an unfair advantage after it helped him to catch 374 small fish and scoop the 260 fourth prize.

Lottery rollover result

Three winning tickets shared Saturday's £13,986,252 Lottery jackpot - the first to roll over from the middle of the week. The winning numbers were: 41, 39, 27, 40, 14, 43. The bonus number was 21.

THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

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people



Wax work: Helen Dion of Madame Tussauds adjusting a model of the Buddhist leader yesterday

Chinese furious as Dalai Lama finds a new friend

For a man of peace, he has caused quite a stir. The Dalai Lama, the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader, yesterday visited Taiwan, bringing together two of the most incendiary issues for mainland China.

China has assailed his journey - and an expected meeting on Thursday with Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui - as the collusion of "splittists" bent on independence from China for both Tibet and Taiwan. China has ruled Tibet with often brutal military force since occupying it in 1950.

Taiwan authorities and the Dalai Lama clique are colluding and using each other, consorting with evildoers, going further and further down the road of splitting China," China's official People's Daily newspaper quoted an unidentified "Tibet specialists" as saying.

Last night, the Buddhist god-king addressed a crowd estimated at more than 20,000 in a stadium in the port city of Kaohsiung. It was the first of three major "enlightenment meetings" at the heart of his busy schedule in Taiwan, which he and his hosts have insisted is strictly religious. Buddhists swarmed for a glimpse of him and supporters waved Tibet's snow-lion flag to greet him.

Intense media scrutiny and crowds of protesters, both for and against his visit, have led to tight security around the Dalai Lama. His limousine was sandwiched in a 20-car motorcade, a treatment usually reserved for foreign heads of state.

His visit has stirred a long-dormant debate about whether Tibet is part of China - a question with deep ramifications for a far hotter debate about whether Taiwan should reunite with China or go it alone.

Taiwan's exiled Republic of China government, ousted from the mainland by the triumphant communists in 1949, maintains that Taiwan and Tibet both are parts of China and that Taiwan should reunite with the mainland, though not before Peking embraces multi-party democracy.

Advocates of Taiwan's independence from China insisted that the Dalai Lama be treated as a visiting head of state, calculating that this would bolster Taiwan's own right to self-determination. Agencies, Taipei

Author finds destiny in a Cornish field

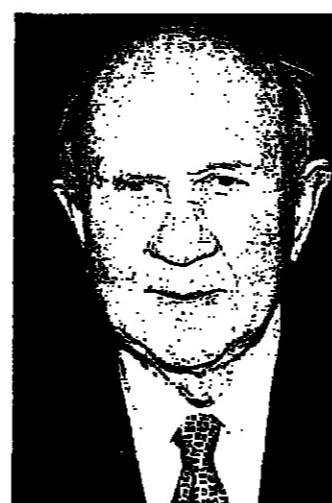
The ashes of author Derek Tangye (right) were scattered near a Cornish meadow yesterday, near the cottage home *The Minack Chronicles* author shared with his late wife, Jeannie, a few miles from Land's End.

It was a memorial both to Mr Tangye, who died last October, aged 84, and to his wife, an author in her own right, who died 11 years ago. Her ashes were also scattered in Honeysuckle Meadow.

Mr Tangye's books about life in Cornwall, and their cats and donkeys, attracted an international readership and were translated into several languages.

Mr Tangye's sister-in-law, Mrs Moira Tangye, said the couple's home, which attracted hundreds of visitors when they were alive, had become "a bit of shrine" for fans since they died.

It was expected that their rented cottage would be relet by the estate which owned it. But the 20 acres stretching down to the sea, bought by Mr Tangye and called Oliverland after one of their cats, would be cared for by the Minack Chronicles Trust he set up.



Chess prodigy is youngest ever

Chess whiz-kid Etienne Bacrot has moved into the history books by becoming the youngest-ever grandmaster. At the tender age of 14 years and two months, the French schoolboy gained the coveted title by winning a tournament at Enghien-les-Bains, near Paris, at the weekend.

Etienne beat the record set by a previous chess prodigy, Peter Leko of Hungary, who became a grandmaster in 1994, at 14-and-a-half. His chess career began at the age of four, when he was taught how to play by his uncle. By the time he was five, he had joined a club, and two years ago he won the under-12 world championship in Brazil, beating a succession of leading adult players to become the world's youngest international chess-master.

Etienne's latest victory came after a last-round win over the Canadian grandmaster Kevin Spraggett. His extreme youth contrasted with his fellow tournament winner, Viktor Korchnoi, who is 65.

He trains solely for up to two weeks a month, attending school in Amiens the rest of the time. Even at school, where he is considered a brilliant pupil, he practises for two hours a day.

Joanna Snicker

A double act with film world's hottest secrets

Could *The English Patient*, the hot favourite at the Academy Awards, be pipped at the post for Best Picture? Could Brenda Blethyn's dowdy, dotty mum in *Secrets and Lies*, the antithesis of the Hollywood glamour puss, really drive 'em wild on Oscar night?

Just two people know the secrets of tonight's Oscar results: accountants Frank Johnson and Greg Garrison, the little grey men from Price Waterhouse. For nearly 70 years, the firm has collected and counted the votes - 5,227 of them this year - that make movie history. Mr Johnson, a 20-year veteran, and Mr Garrison will be picked up from their Century City offices today, carrying a set of envelopes in plain zippered briefcases. A team of eight tallied the results

on Friday; the secret is theirs for 72 hours. "We do it all in one large room, but we use all parts of the room so that no one can see what anybody else is doing," Mr Johnson said. "Greg and I give out the ballots in small groups to the counters, so only Greg and I summarise the tallies and know for who has won."

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences pays Price Waterhouse about \$30,000 a year for the work - a snip compared to campaigns waged for the films by their producers and distributors, who can spend up to \$4m trying to snag an Oscar. Academy members are routinely courted with private screenings, presentation videotapes, scripts, books, phone calls, and even home visits. Tim Cornewell, Los Angeles

briefing

EVOLUTION

Better diet means Britons will reach new heights

Britons will grow at least 13cm taller over the next few generations, thanks to better nutrition, an expert on ageing has predicted.

Delivering a lecture in London, Professor Robert Fogel, of the University of Chicago, said humans had not yet reached their optimum height, body size, health or life expectancy.

He predicted that the average height of the nation will increase from 177cm to 190cm. Babies were being better nourished in the womb, and fewer women were smoking while pregnant, he said.

Indeed, Professor Fogel said growth could be even higher than he had forecast. "We really do not know what the maximum height for humans is yet," he said. "But the signs are that we still have a long way to go."

The average British male in 1700 weighed 134lb - 20 per cent less than he does today. Professor Fogel said: "As we have gained control over our environment, body size has increased over 50 per cent and life expectancy has risen by around 100 per cent."

HEALTH

Bar workers risk fatal disease

Bar staff are facing unacceptable risks to their health by being exposed to broken glasses, according to a study published today. The researchers, writing in the journal *Occupational Medicine*, say action is urgently needed to protect them from the threat of cross-infection.

An investigation of 91 bar workers in South Glamorgan revealed that 74 per cent reported cut injuries, of whom 18 per cent were injured on more than 10 occasions. Between 10 and 15 per cent of the injuries required hospital treatment, and that although only 30 per cent of staff wore gloves, which showed no evidence of offering protection against injury.

The research team from the University of Wales College of Medicine, Cardiff, said that most injuries were inflicted to hands through collecting and washing glasses, and in occasional fights.

Just over half of those questioned had had contact with body fluids such as blood, vomit, urine and faeces, increasing the risk of catching the potentially fatal liver condition, Hepatitis B.



EDUCATION

Books shortage hinders schools

Many schools are failing to meet the needs of the National Curriculum because of a shortage of suitable books, with parents unaware of the problem, it is claimed today. A study by the School Book Alliance has found that nearly one third of pupils share books with classmates and another third are forced to use damaged or outdated editions.

With half of parents in the survey ignorant of the problem, most were shocked to learn how little schools spent on books - an average of £19.23 per child. But only a quarter considered books to be the most important aspect of learning. With education being a hot political subject in the run-up to the election, two-thirds of the parents said they would be more likely to vote for a party which promised to devote extra money to education.

Professor Eric Bolton, a former senior chief inspector of schools, blamed computers for the empty libraries and decrepit books. "There are very good arguments for increasing the number of computers in schools," he said. "But those arguments should not obscure the fact that books are absolutely essential for learning to read and for the development of a child's education."

Starved of Books, free, School Book Alliance, 22 Endell Street, Covent Garden, London WC2H 9AD. Joanna Snicker

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Crime is top priority for councils

Tackling crime is the most important service that councils can deliver, a survey of attitudes has found. Three-quarters of people questioned placed crime and law and order issues at the top of their list of priorities.

Fire services were also regarded as very important but, surprisingly, rubbish collection and street cleaning were placed above schools, which were rated the same as pavement maintenance.

The MORI poll, carried out on behalf of the Local Government Association, also disclosed that six out of 10 people would like their authorities to have more freedom to fix Council Tax at the level needed to provide good services. Twice as many people were satisfied with their local council as with Parliament, the figures suggest.

Street lighting was a priority for 49 per cent of the sample, while parks, open spaces and trees were important for half of those questioned.

SOCIETY

Popularity of spirits drains away

Sales of mineral water are sparkling, but spirits are drooping, according to a survey published today. As many as 63 per cent of hotels and restaurants reported increases in mineral water purchases last year. But the overall picture for spirits revealed a "steady, slow decline", said the *Hotel and Restaurant magazine 1997 Drinks Market Report*.

Based on returns from hotels and restaurants, the survey, conducted by NOP, revealed that after mineral water, bottled beer was the biggest growth area in 1996. South African wine was thought likely to show the biggest increase in sales among wines this year, although demand for wines from other "New World" producers - such as Australia, Chile and New Zealand is also tipped to grow steadily, at the expense of European vineyards.

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Number's up for Captain Cook's village



Nigel Burnham

A storm of protest has erupted in a celebrated North Yorkshire fishing village over a plan to number houses and cottages which currently have historic names, so that postmen can find their way around more easily.

Royal Mail argues that the move is necessary because, although it accepts that the regular postmen "could do his rounds blindfolded", Staithes, near Whitby, is "a nightmare" for relief postmen who often get lost in the maze of tightly packed cottages which spill down the steep cliffside to the seafront, unsure whether to climb Slippery Hill or negotiate Dog Loop (an alley so narrow most people have to turn sideways to pass through) in search of Venus Cottage or True Love.

"People would have to change their insurance, building society and banking details, and a lot of the romance of the village would be lost."

Jean Ecclestone, the village sub-postmistress and a legal historian, was similarly hostile. "Everyone is against it," she said. "The names of the houses and cottages of Staithes are part of our history in that they were named after fishing boats

would make life considerably easier for postmen and at the same time facilitate the computerised sorting of mail.

But residents of the village made famous by Captain James Cook who in his teenage years worked in a local grocery shop before moving to Whitby to study maritime navigation – have greeted the proposal with derision.

Angela Ellis, clerk to the parish council, said: "We've had a meeting and we think the idea's daft. Royal Mail say it would make the computer sorting of mail easier but we think it would only cause confusion and a lot of upheaval."

"People would have to change their insurance, building society and banking details, and a lot of the romance of the village would be lost."

Jean Ecclestone, the village



Number's up: Andrew Griffin, one of the residents who is leading the fight against plans to do away with house names and introduce numbers to historic dwellings like Captain Cook's cottage (top left). Photographs Richard Rayner and Ian Duncan/North News Inset right: Captain Cook, Staithes' most famous son

relief staff have found it difficult to find houses in the maze of harbourside yards and alleys.

"The truth is, there aren't many places in the country where houses only have names and Scarborough council has done something similar elsewhere to modernise things a bit. We just want to improve efficiency, avoid delays and provide a better service."

Michael Clements, director of technical services at Scarborough council, said: "I can see Royal Mail's point. The computerised sorting of mail is a system which obviously lends itself to numbers but I don't personally think it would work in Staithes."

The layout of the village is such that it would be difficult to compile a logical numbering sequence and over the passage of time the numbers might well replace the names for good, and an important part of the village's history would be lost."

English crayfish claws back from the edge



Survival: A crayfish at a colony near Winchester in the care of the conservation officer Tim Sykes. Photograph: Nicolo Kurtz

Nicholas Schoon
Environment Correspondent

Humanity is helping the native English crayfish make its last stand on one of the country's finest chalk streams – having caused the crustacean to be almost wiped out in the first place.

Five years ago the crayfish, which resembles an elegant miniature lobster, was widespread along the length of the Hampshire Itchen, a near-pristine river which flows through Winchester. Now it survives in only one location in the headwaters of a tributary, the Cheriton stream. The disaster has been caused by a lethal fungal disease, introduced with the American signal crayfish.

It's the same story for streams and rivers across southern England, from Cornwall to Kent. The American invader, which is immune to the disease, is marching northwards.

If the fungal plague does not kill the native species, then the new arrival appears to do the job itself. Being bigger, more aggressive and mobile it can out-compete the Englishman and is also known to eat it.

The American was brought here in the 1970s to be reared in tanks and ponds for human consumption. It soon escaped into the wild along with three other non-native crayfish species which pose a lesser threat to the local variety.

There are thought to be only about 2,000 native, or white-clawed, crayfish in the surviving colony in the stream at Alresford, near Winchester. Thirty have been captured, including females carrying fertilised eggs, and are being raised at nearby Sparsholt College.

The hope is that they will breed and provide a captive population which can be released back into the Itchen some time in future if the colony is wiped out. The native crayfish is protected by law, while releasing the invaders into the wild is now a crime.

The government's Environment Agency is also hoping to boost the colony's numbers by improving the underwater habitat for the crayfish. Ten tonnes of large, knobby flintstones are being placed along a 100-yard stretch of stream bed. These provide the nooks and crannies the crayfish need to shelter in.

Tim Sykes, the agency's conservation officer in Hampshire, said: "The crayfish plague worked its way upstream at an amazing speed. Two summers ago there were just two colonies left and now we're down to one."

He found a female nesting in a hole in a stone. Folded into her curled up tail was a cluster of half-bearing-sized eggs, which she protects all through the winter and spring. She emerged after a moment, signalling her displeasure by giving him a sharp nip on the hand. The agency is working with local conservation groups in Yorkshire, surveying streams and rivers for the native and the aliens.

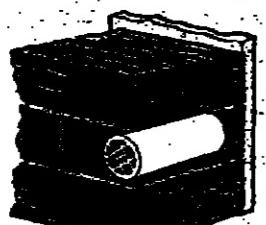
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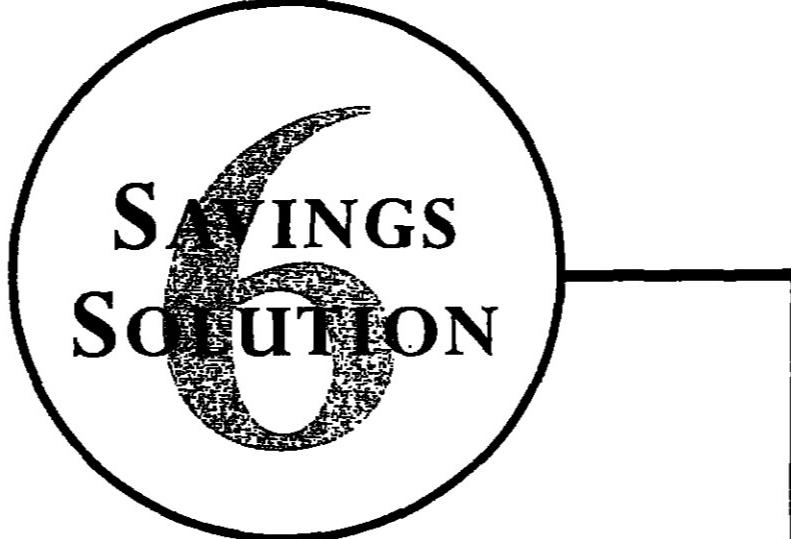
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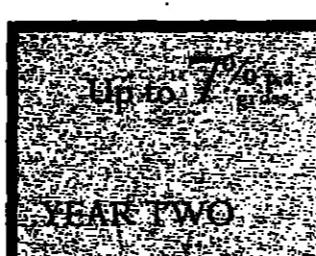
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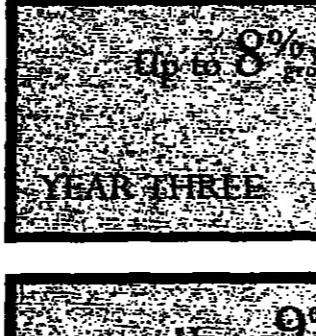
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news

Yard chief who believes drugs can be stopped

Ian Burrell

The British police's foremost expert on the international drugs trade said yesterday that trafficking could be stopped "virtually altogether" but the public chose instead to accept "tolerable" levels of drug abuse.

Tony White, former head of the drugs branch of the National Criminal Intelligence Service, will today take up his new post with the United Nations, based in Vienna, where he will be responsible for reducing international drugs supply.

In an interview with *The In-*

dependent, he said that British society had chosen a balance between the level of drugs-related problems and the degree of infringement of personal freedom it was prepared to accept from police and Customs officers.

Given enough resources, an island like Britain could stop the inflow of drugs by creating an anti-terrorist-style ring of steel, he said. Instead, people chose to support free-trade zones and to pass through Customs controls with minimal checks.

"It is the public who will determine what level of menace from drugs they are prepared to tolerate and what they are prepared to contribute or surrender in order to prevent the situation exceeding that level of toleration," he said.

Last week, senior police officers warned that Britain was in the midst of a heroin problem worse than it had ever experienced. They said the drug was forcing girls as young as 12 into prostitution and spawning

a crime wave. Superintendent White estimated that drugs problems in Britain had already led to a "gentle backlash" in the form of workplace drug-testing and proposed drug tests on drivers.

He said such measures would have to be carefully implemented and "aimed as much towards helping individuals as punishing or stigmatising them". He added: "In recent years demand for licit drugs has risen in a similar way to demand

for illicit ones and the increasing pressures and anxieties of workplaces may well have contributed to this."

Mr White, who rarely admits he has personally never smoked so much as a cigarette, has journeyed from the coca valleys of Colombia to the opium fields of the Golden Triangle to build up his encyclopaedic knowledge of international trafficking.

He is concerned that the recent preoccupation with the concept of "organised crime"

could weaken the battle against major drugs suppliers. The Home Secretary, Michael Howard, is setting up a national crime squad to target major criminals and groups of criminals.

Mr White, 52, said the fashionability of the term "organised crime" had been driven by dogma and political expediency. Major criminals could be prosecuted for drugs trafficking but not for Mafia activity.

"There is still no offence under UK statute of being en-

gaged in organised crime", or of "being an organised criminal".

The emphasis then should be on offences for which we may hope to apprehend, charge and convict those involved."

Mr White said attempts to defeat major drugs traffickers by confiscating their assets had not lived up to expectations.

"The total amount of cash actually confiscated has been of nothing like the order envisaged and is only a tiny percentage of the profits calculated to accrue

from the illicit drugs trade in the UK," he said.

Mr White said the work of financial investigation by police and Customs was usually time-consuming and costly, and suggested that the creation of a multi-agency national financial investigation and intelligence service might be more effective.

Considerable work has been done to improve relations between police and customs but rivalries remain, said Mr White, who is also to step down as a member of the Association of Chief Police Officers' sub-com-

mittee on drugs.

Reach for the sky: British climber tries for death zone record

Charles Arthur

Alan Hinkes expects to spend the summer feeling scared, cold and tired, relying on his wits and strength to keep him alive while suffering crushing headaches and bone-aching pain.

The 42-year-old mountaineer is looking forward to it eagerly. "I'm not scared," he said last week. "I'm keen to get on and do what I enjoy."

Mr Hinkes, who sets off for the Himalayas this week, aims to be the first person to climb six of the world's 14 highest peaks in less than eight months – and so become the first Briton to reach all 14 of the "8,000ers", as the mountains over 8,000 metres

To me, success is coming back alive. No mountain is worth your life.

trees are known. He is already recognised as this country's premier high-altitude mountaineer. In the past nine years he has climbed the other eight 8,000ers, including Everest and K2, the world's two highest peaks. But only five people have so far climbed all 14.

To speed up his attempts Mr Hinkes, a former teacher from North Yorkshire, will be ferried by helicopter from mountain to mountain once he has completed each ascent and descent – taking 10 minutes rather than 10 days. The operation will cost more than £70,000, paid by his principal sponsor, the outdoor equipment company Berghausen.

His audacious itinerary will repeatedly take him into the "Death Zone", as the region above 8,000 metres is known. There, the body needs more oxygen than the atmosphere contains. That slows the brain down and makes the body use itself as fuel – a feeling, he once wrote, like "being crushed in a vice."

Even so, he will attempt each of the peaks alone and without



That Alan Hinkes schedule:

26 March: fly to Kathmandu - begin walk-in to base camp at Lhotse

12 April: earliest likely arrival date at Lhotse base camp

1 May: earliest likely attempt on Lhotse after acclimatisation

April-June: attempts on Lhotse, Makalu, Kangchenjunga. Each attempt will take between 2 to 4 days ascent; about same time for descent from base camp of first two mountains will take helicopter to next - 10 minutes rather than 10 days".

Late June: travel to base camp, Nanga Parbat, to avoid monsoon conditions on eastern Himalaya.

July-August: attempt Nanga Parbat. Await end of monsoons and better weather further west.

September: return west to travel into base camp of Dhaulagiri. Attempt summit. Trans to Annapurna. Attempt summit.

October: complete Annapurna. If necessary, return to eastern Himalaya to attempt any of the first three that were unsuccessful.

Body of stowaway boy found in jet undercarriage

Jojo Moyes

The body of a young boy who apparently stowed away on a jumbo jet was found in the aircraft's nose-wheel bay after it landed yesterday at Gatwick airport. Airline ground staff made the discovery after the plane, with 356 passengers on board, arrived from Nairobi in Kenya.

The boy, who is thought to

have been aged between eight and 14 and of African appearance, had crush injuries apparently caused by the hydraulic mechanism of the British Airways Boeing 747.

His body, clad only in light clothing, was taken to Crawley hospital for a post-mortem examination. Whether he had been injured when the plane took off from Kenya or when it

came in to land at Gatwick, or whether he died from hypothermia in the sub-zero temperatures as the aircraft made its flight was not known.

Yesterday a search began to find out whether the boy was alone.

Sussex police said they were not treating the boy's death as suspicious. Chief Inspector Mike Alderson said: "We don't know what motivated him to

take this desperate act, but whatever his motivation was, it is a tragic loss of life."

Bob Aylng, British Airways' chief executive, said: "This is a tragic loss of life which we very much regret. Security is paramount to British Airways and we take this incident very seriously."

In a similar incident, a stowaway survived 10 hours in the

undercarriage of a British Airways jumbo jet with temperatures falling as low as minus 40 degrees Celsius last October.

Pardeep Saini, 22, was found suffering from hypothermia by baggage handlers at Heathrow following the flight from Delhi to London. His younger brother, Vijay, froze to death during the flight after the pair hid in a wheel housing. Mr Saini this month appealed against his rejected political asylum application to stay in Britain.

Immigration officials were yesterday interviewing three men, thought to be from Albania, who were found hiding in a lorry trailer at Kettering, Northamptonshire. The men were discovered when staff at the site went to unpack the lorry, which had arrived from Calais.

Charles Arthur and Nicole Veash

Outer space has something in common with Britain – a litter problem – which is posing a growing hazard to satellites and manned space missions.

Discarded items are crowding the heavens, and could seed a catastrophic "cascade" effect, where litter collides and smashes into small pieces forming a whirling junkyard destroying everything in its path.

With speeds of thousands of miles per hour, a pea-sized piece of junk could destroy millions of dollars worth of space equipment. "Our great concern is that the proposal to launch 1,000 satellites for telephone communications by the end of the century will provide a concentration of mass which [could] prompt a cascade," said Richard Crowther of the Defence Research Agency.

In July last year the first doc-

umented space collision occurred between the French Céres microsatellite and a piece of an Ariane rocket, destroying the satellite's functions.

"There are 8,500 objects that NASA can track up there, and only 6 per cent of them are operational, which means 94 per cent is space junk," said Dr Crowther.

"They vary from satellites left in orbit, to breakups from the old days, when the Soviets used to blow up their surveillance satellites, and a screw driver dropped by an astronaut."

Though many items of space debris are eventually dragged down into the atmosphere where they burn up harmlessly, a huge number remain in orbit.

Experts say that in future, space travel will still be possible, but will be more expensive, as rockets and astronauts will need extra shielding against the possibility of debris impact.

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election countdown

Brown to use benefit savings to cut deficit

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

Some of the savings generated by Labour's programme to get 250,000 young unemployed people into work would be used to cut the budget deficit, Gordon Brown said yesterday.

The shadow Chancellor's statement will surprise some of his frontbench colleagues, who had been expecting that the long-term dividend would be used, instead, to increase spending on education, health and welfare programmes.

That was not being ruled out completely last night, but Mr Brown made clear, in a BBC television *On the Record* interview that some of the money saved on the Social Security budget would be used to cut public borrowing.

Mr Brown said Treasury projections showed a "black hole" Tory deficit of £26bn this year, and £19bn next year.

"The £26bn is big indeed," he said, "and the reason that we have made these tough decisions about public spending is because we recognise we have got to get the deficit down."

He said that would be achieved by renouncing recent "reckless" Conservative spending commitments, such as £60m for a royal yacht.

But when he was pressed, specifically, to say how the budget deficit would be cut back, Mr Brown said: "What we want to do, of course, and that's why we have this big welfare to work programme, is to cut the spending on welfare ..."

"We are reducing the deficit by tackling unemployment and high Social Security bills. We're also helping the reduction of the deficit by not making these extraordinary spending commitments the Tories have made."

Labour yesterday confirmed that it would be producing a sep-

arate "business manifesto" which would, among other things, say: "We will ask about public spending the questions any manager in a company would ask: not how much more there is to spend, but how to spend existing resources more efficiently to meet our priorities. Ministers will be asked to save before they spend."

Party sources said that part of the manifesto had been drafted in co-operation with Adair Turner, director general of the Confederation of British Industry.

Mr Brown also said yesterday that the CBI would be a key player in a business and government working party that would be set up during Britain's six-month presidency of the European Union, starting in January.

"I think this is a very important development because it shows that business and government can work together, both in Britain and Europe, to achieve common aims," he told *On the Record*.

"And we're getting away from this old idea that the public [sector] has got to say one thing, private [industry] has got to say another and there's never any proper relationship between them."

The business manifesto will say: "We have consistently proposed a number of areas, including energy, telecommunications and financial services, where Europe needs to open markets further in order to make the single market a reality, and to increase flexibility, productivity and employment."

"We will establish in government a British Presidency Working Group, consisting of government ministers and business representatives, including the CBI, to discuss themes and policy initiatives in preparation for the UK's Presidency of the European Union in 1998."



Phone-in: Tony Blair answering questions from journalists during a telephone press conference from his home in Islington, north London, yesterday. Photograph: Adrian Dennis

New plea for Major to recall Parliament

Anthony Bevins

The Conservative MP Richard Shepherd yesterday urged the Prime Minister to recall Parliament, to consider the findings of the report into the Commons cast-for-questions affair.

He told GMTV's *Sunday*

programme that a recall was up to John Major, and he added:

"I'm sure the Prime Minister

doesn't want his campaign to be bogged down in the torrent of abuse that's now heaped on him

personally, but on the whole system as well. I think this should be stopped in the bud straight away."

Mr Shepherd, MP for Aldridge-Brownhills, said the issue went much further than party politics. "It's something that we all of us, at the back of our mind, feel that the pride that we once had in our Parliament is now the subject of innumerable rumours and a deep suspicion."

"And it undermines the authority of governments whatever the government is – if it's believed that MPs are merely in it for what they can get, that they hide and they're deceitful and that they're taking money on the side in envelopes."

But Michael Heseltine, the

Deputy Prime Minister, told

BBC television's *Breakfast with Frost* programme that Mr Shepherd was wrong.

The delivery of a report by Sir Gordon Downey, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, was just the first stage in a protracted process which included the Commons Committee on Standards and Privileges taking evidence as a follow-up to Sir Gordon's report.

"This could take weeks," Mr Heseltine said. "The giving of the report only takes you to the next stage."

But Mr Shepherd's call for a parliamentary recall was

backed by Robin Cook for Labour, and Paddy Ashdown, for the Liberal Democrats.

Mr Cook said a Labour government would ask Lord Nolan's Committee on Standards in Public Life "to have a fresh look at the system of regulating the conduct of MPs."

"As we move into the 21st century," he said, "people will not understand why the House of Commons cannot be subject to an element of independent scrutiny."

Mr Ashdown told GMTV:

"This is a very, very big issue. The reputation of Parliament as well as the integrity of the

MPs concerned, is at now stake. And Mr Blair was preparing to "chicken out".

Labour and the Liberal Democrats insisted that Dr Mawhinney was trying to "bounce" the other parties in advance of detailed discussions with the broadcasters.

Labour wants fair treatment for Mr Ashdown, and the inclusion of an audience – which was objected to by Mr Heseltine yesterday – but Lord Holme, the Liberal Democrats' negotiator, said: "It's not for Dr Mawhinney, before discussions have even begun, to dictate unilaterally the terms of the debate."

Labour enlists football clubs to tackle literacy shortfall

Lucy Ward
Education Correspondent

Switched-off youngsters scoring low marks at school would be lured back to learning at study centres in football stadiums under plans being announced by Labour today.

In the latest of a package of Labour proposals aimed at raising Britain's ranking in the literacy league, top football clubs would open their doors to inner-city pupils for evening homework sessions and lessons in the three R's.

In return for their efforts, youngsters would be rewarded with a chance to take to the pitch afterwards for a match on for football coaching.

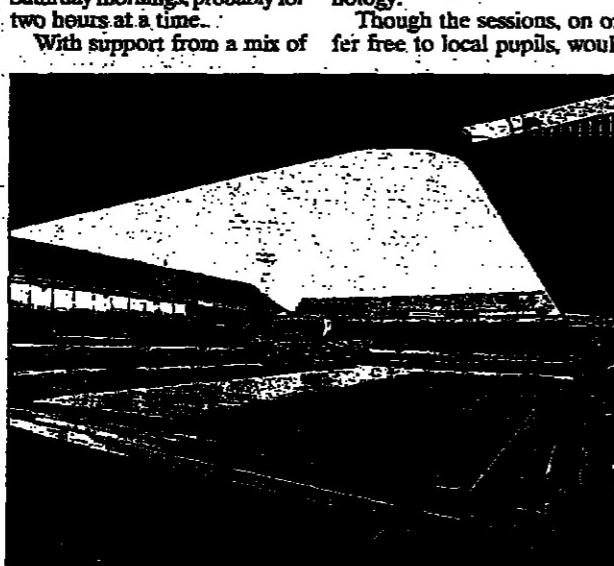
Labour believes the initiative, developed jointly with the Premier League, could be the one answer to the problem of flagging basic skills standards, particularly among disaffected boys.

Girls are currently 10 per cent ahead of boys in GCSE exam scores, while among 11-year-olds, only 57 per cent reached the expected standard in literacy.

The study support centres, each capable of accomodating

between 60 and 100 children, would be launched at Arsenal, Newcastle United, Chelsea and Sheffield Wednesday football clubs, though Labour expects more to come on board as the scheme progresses.

Pupils would be able to attend on weekday evenings or Saturday mornings, probably for two hours at a time.



Hillsborough: Planned home to one of the study centres

experienced teachers and student volunteers, primary-age children would be given timetabled literacy lessons, while secondary pupils would brush up on basic skills.

There would also be space for

children to do supervised homework, and computer facilities for training in information technology.

Though the sessions, on offer free to local pupils, would

not be compulsory, Labour expects volunteers to be "queuing up" to attend.

Labour's education spokesman David Blunkett, a Sheffield Wednesday supporter, said the scheme was "an excellent and cost-effective means of raising standards and improving pupil motivation".

He added: "It is a unique and valuable venture in which everyone is a winner."

Funding for the scheme, being launched by Mr Blunkett at Chelsea Football Club today, would be split three ways between the Department for Education and Employment, the football club, and private sponsors.

Each study centre would receive up to £50,000 capital money, mainly for computer equipment, and £100,000 a year to cover running costs.

The stadium study centres

would add to Labour's proposals for a new daily literacy hour in the national curriculum and extra training in literacy teaching for primary teachers.

The party said last month it

aimed to bring 80 per cent of 11-year-olds up to nationally set standards by 2001 and 100 per cent by 2006.

Their seats appeared to fit neatly with the ambitions of Bryan Davies, Labour's higher education spokesman and MP for Oldham Central and Royton, and Mike Watson, member for Glasgow Central – both of whom have lost their seats because of boundary changes.

However, last night Mr Watson said that he would not stand for Mr Hoig's seat as there was a strong local candidate, and if Bryan Davies decides to stand for Mr Hoig's seat he is likely to face competition.

Mr Hoig, who has been in Parliament since 1979 and is Warrington's MP since 1981, said yesterday that he thought it best to quit while he was

ahead. Now that a clear Labour victory seemed likely, he had to consider whether he really wanted another full term in Parliament. "I always think it is better to go when people still have a lot of respect for you," he said.

Mr Hoig added that the party would begin the shortlisting process this week, and although there would be no time for nominations from different branches – as is the normal custom – there should still be a one-member-one-vote ballot for his successor.

"It will be up to Bryan whether he puts his name in, but my view is that Warrington will make its own mind up. I can consider it, but on balance this wasn't the right one for me."

The two who have decided, definitely, to retire are Doug Howie, the MP for Warrington North and chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party, and Norman Hogg, MP for Cumbernauld and Kilsyth.

The Independent • MONDAY 24 MARCH 1997

news

Still life with Jeffrey: How Lord Archer is playing to the gallery

Jojo Moyes

"I'm very aware that at my Christmas parties there are four groups," says Lord Archer. "Those who come for the view; those who come for the company; those who come for the champagne and shepherd's pie; and those who come for the pic-

tures." In the week it was revealed that he was to open his collection to the public to raise money for the Royal Academy. The *Independent*, placing itself firmly in the fourth category, was allowed a private view.

First in sight are the 70 political cartoons which grace Lord Archer's hallway, includ-

ing works by Ralph Steadman, Vicky, Efi Shepherd and Gerald Scarfe, who has penned one particularly vicious portrait of Lady Thatcher. "I have to steer her past it like this," he says, demonstrating, "when she comes round."

Cartoons aside, Lord Archer's 13th-floor penthouse

on the Albert embankment overlooking the Houses of Parliament boasts more than 250 paintings by impressionists and 20th century artists. Against the cream, gold and black neoclassical decor sit works by, amongst others, Miró, Picasso, Dufy, Matisse, Lowry and Vuillard.

Lord Archer's first painting was bought "on the King's Road outside Safeways" for £25. "I only had £35 in the bank so I was terrified of telling Mary. I've never told her since what I paid because she'd turn in her grave," he says. Lady Archer, who is, of course, very much alive, is unlikely to quibble too

much. As well as letting her "steal" the best ones for her study, Lord Archer had her immortalised in oils by Bryan Organ – as he points out, "that's who painted Prince Charles".

One enormous Vuillard features a woman who looks uncannily like his wife. The artist is a favourite, he says. "I can't

afford Monet, Manet or Renoir, so I decided to go for Pissarro, Vuillard and the like. It was a cash thing." The second division of impressionists? "Yes, but I'm trying to pick the best of the division."

Many paintings have been bought with the proceeds of his best-selling novels. Perhaps in recognition of this, on a coffee table, a stone's throw from a Henry Moore, sits a silver cigar case made in the shape of one of his paperbacks, and embossed with the words: "Not A Penny More, Not A Penny Less".

Lord Archer has found many good bargains since his first purchases. One favourite came from Alain Bondi, bankrupt

in Australia. He cannot resist showing another, which had an auction estimate of £25,000, but he managed to get for £2,000. When we have some trouble working out the name of the artist, he calls his dealer, who tells me, "I hear it was a special purchase," I say. Pause. "Every purchase is a special purchase," the dealer replies.

Lord Archer knows the value of a good dealer. Since his

first days as a supporter of the

RA 30 years ago, when he

bought his paintings "for £50", he has missed a couple of works through indecision. "I made some bad mistakes at first. I failed to pick up a wonderful Craigie Aitchison for £750. I went back a second day, a third day and it was sold." The ones that got away appear to haunt him. One sculpture he recently lost he described as "killing him".

The Royal Academy tours, due to take place on two days in May and June, are already heavily oversubscribed, and there will be ballots to determine the 60 guests. But there are others who get regular viewings, he says, including the Camberwell Art School and many "serious artists". Those unable to see the real paintings may see his postcard reproductions.

Despite his passion for art – "a drug" – Lord Archer is unlikely to have much time to spare over the coming weeks, during a campaign which he admits will be "a struggle". Curiously, the day before our visit he had joked, at a gallery opening, that pictures of John Major as prime minister were likely to be more valuable after the election. I am reminded of this as I notice a framed cartoon by Peter Brookes, posing the famous photograph of Harold Wilson as a child outside No 10 against a copy featuring Tony Blair. Why had he chosen this one? "For its historical significance," he replies.

Does that mean, I venture, that he thinks Mr Blair will win? For the first time that morning, Lord Archer fixes me with a steely glare. "Certainly not," he says. And the tour is over.



Broad canvas: Enzo Piazzotta's *Christ With Sinners* sits against the panoramic view from Lord Archer's 15th-floor penthouse. Photograph: Edward Sykes

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international

Israel braced for further suicide attacks

Patrick Cockburn
Jerusalem

As relations between Israel and the Palestinians deteriorate in the wake of the suicide bomb in Tel Aviv, the head of Israeli military intelligence said yesterday that he expected further suicide attacks because the Palestinian security services were not co-operating with Israeli intelligence.

General Moshe Yahalon, the head of Israeli military intelligence, said at a series of meetings the Palestinian security forces had said they were "conditioning co-operation" on political concessions by Israel.

Ranimat: 'Quiet guy' who would not be suspected

He said that Hamas, Islamic Jihad and other militant organisations believed they still had a "green light" from Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, to make further attacks.

Amid signs that security co-operation between Israel and the Palestinian leadership was breaking down - having survived four suicide bombs last year - General Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, the Israeli chief of

staff, said that Jibril Rajoub, the head of Palestinian security on the West Bank, was in practice fomenting riots in Hebron and Bethlehem, while nominally trying to suppress them.

Gen Yahalon said in a briefing last night that Palestinian security would only act against Hamas if ordered to do so by Mr Arafat. This order had yet to come. He said that at meetings with militant leaders after his return from the US on 9 March, Mr Arafat had given the impression that he would not object to military action against Israel.

The allegations of non-co-operation by Palestinian security contradict earlier statements by other Israeli ministers that they were co-operating closely with Mr Rajoub.

As Israelis waited yesterday to see if there would be other bombs, the three women killed on Friday, Yael Gilad, 32, Anat Winter-Rosen, 31, and Michal Avrahami, 32, were buried in Tel Aviv. Meanwhile, the Israeli Cabinet was expected to suspend peace talks with the Palestinian Authority. These were already largely terminated by the Palestinians after Israel decided to build a Jewish settlement at Har Homa. David Bar-Han, the government's head of communications, said Israel wanted Mr Arafat to take tougher security measures. "Until we see some movement at this level there will be no talks," he said.

There was a third day of rioting in Hebron, where Israeli troops and Palestinian security men were trying to stop stone-throwing boys attacking a settlement of 400 Jews in the city



Watching brief: Settler children in fancy dress for the Jewish holiday of Purim guarded by Jewish soldiers in Hebron yesterday. Photograph: AP

centre. In Bethlehem two Palestinians were shot and wounded by border guards when they ran away from a checkpoint.

Among those Israel wants arrested is Ibrahim Maqademeh,

the Hamas leader recently released from jail, who told a rally of several thousand Hamas supporters in Khan Younis in Gaza on the day of the bombing that holy warriors "should

blow up enemies of Allah to stop the bulldozers of Netanyahu."

Speaking of Har Homa, Mr Arafat, who is attending a conference of 54 Islamic states in Pakistan, said:

"We were surprised by the Israeli decision to isolate and Judaize Jerusalem."

Gen Yahalon said Israel, having withdrawn from parts of Gaza and the West Bank, need

to end the co-operation of Palestinian intelligence. Mr Arafat's most powerful card has always been security co-operation and if Israeli allegations are true, he has decided to show that Israel

cannot do without it. Earlier, Avigdor Kahloni, the Internal Security Minister, made a surprisingly optimistic statement after meeting Jibril Rajoub, the head of Palestinian Preventive Security on the West Bank, saying: "There is going to be an open line between Jibril Rajoub and my office and ever myself."

Mahmoud Abed el Kader Razimati, 28, the suicide bomber, had a different background from previous bombers and may have been chosen for this reason, to lull suspicions. Living in the village of Zurif, near Hebron, he was a father of four and had a regular job. Previous bombers have been younger, unemployed and unmarried.

People who knew the bomber said he was "a quiet guy", known to be a supporter of Hamas, but not very active. He had been arrested four times since the start of the Palestinian intifada in 1987. He had worked in the kitchens of restaurants in Rishon Lezion on the outskirts of Tel Aviv and slept in one of them on the night before he took the bus to Tel Aviv to blow himself up.

Moshe Zanzuri, the owner of the Formaggio restaurant in Rishon Lezion, was arrested during the weekend for questioning about Razimati, who used to work for him.

It is unclear whether Razimati was one of 57,000 Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank with a permit to work in Israel, or one of tens of thousands of illegal workers.

Meanwhile, Israeli security services are now seeking to demolish Razimati's house in Zurif village, where a 24-hour curfew has been imposed.

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Dutch to unveil plan for multi-speed EU

Sarah Helm
Brussels

Detailed plans for a single European policy on immigration and judicial matters and an end to internal border checks will be unveiled this week, opening the way for the biggest transfer of power to Brussels since the Maastricht Treaty.

For the first time, new draft texts make clear that policy on immigration and asylum will not only be harmonised, but brought directly under the control of the European Union's institutions.

The proposals, to be presented by the Dutch government, which holds the EU presidency, also set out rules for an opt-out for countries which are opposed. The offer is specifically directed at Britain which is refusing to end border checks.

The plans also give the first firm proposals for a mechanism to create a multi-speed Europe, allowing countries which want to pool powers faster than others to do so. Such a plan, known as "flexible" decision-making, is strongly opposed by Britain, which fears the creation of a hard-core Europe, from which it would be excluded.

EU leaders will be hoping for a harmonious Rome meeting but are certain to find that Britain stands in opposition to the integration plans.

Not only does the Government disagree with many elements of the draft text, but the plans could also bring confrontation with Labour, should Tony Blair win the election.

The Dutch are already proposing a mini summit with Mr Blair on 12 May in order to ensure that the Labour leader would have time to sign the Amsterdam treaty on 17 June should he be elected.

Although many of the proposals outlined by the Dutch are far-reaching, their implementation remains many years away. The most significant plan is the scheme giving the EU the right to make laws on immigration, asylum and internal EU security.

Most member states accept that immigration into the community can only be controlled by joint action. Even Denmark, which has an opt-out from justice policy-sharing, is considering whether to accept the new proposals in the wake of rising asylum figures.

If internal checks are to be abolished, member states believe it is essential that the EU takes compensating measures, toughening its external "ring fence" in order to deter people entering from outside.

The European Commission should in future have powers to propose laws on a common EU visa regime and common rules for reception of immigrants and asylum-seekers. The European Court of Justice in Luxembourg would for the first time oversee implementations of legislation in this area.



Battle lines drawn: Police clash with demonstrators during a Day of Freedom rally in Minsk, the Belarus capital, yesterday. About 10,000 people took part in the anti-government march and there were 3,000 arrests. Photograph: AP

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Papuan PM defies rebel soldiers' deadline

Papua New Guinea's Prime Minister, Sir Julius Chan, stood firm at the weekend and refused to resign before tomorrow's deadline, which has been set by rebel soldiers who want him to resign over his planned use of mercenaries against insurgents on the island of Bougainville. Australia's Foreign Minister, Alexander Downer, said that the country's defence forces had been upgraded to a higher degree of readiness as a result of the crisis in Papua New Guinea. Reuters - Port Moresby

Albanians over a barrel

Bashkim Fino, the Albanian Prime Minister, warned at the weekend that his coalition government may not be able to deliver on a key promise: elections by June. Voters could not be expected to cast ballots under the barrel of a gun, Mr Fino said. AP - Tirana

More grisly finds in Belgium

Belgian police said that they had found remains from at least three bodies, probably women, in 10 plastic rubbish bags in the southern town of Cuesmes. In a separate, apparently unrelated find in the western village of Merelbeke, the skull of an elderly man was found in a plastic bag. Reuter - Brussels

Five die in cult-house fire

Five people were found dead in a mysterious blaze at a house in Canada which was owned by a doomsday cult that has been involved in a number of suicides and murders. The bodies of three women and two men were found in a house in rural Quebec owned by the Solar Temple sect. Reuters - Montreal

Colombo's vote of confidence

The Sri Lankan government's sweeping win in local elections held on Friday will help the administration to push ahead with a plan to end the separatist war being waged by Tamil Tiger rebels, analysts said. President Chandrika Kumaratunga's People's Alliance coalition swept to a landslide victory. Reuters - Colombo

Mexican party sent packing

Mexico's opposition humbled the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) in the state of Morelos, stripping the PRI of majority control of the state congress, final results at the weekend showed. Reuters - Mexico City

Paw landing

Jeff Lyons thought the bump when he landed his plane was a pothole - he did not realise he had run over his golden retriever, Jazz, who suffered a broken leg and gashed back. "I've seen a lot of dogs run over by cars, but never a plane," a vet, Luke Lipham, said. AP - Carrollton, Georgia

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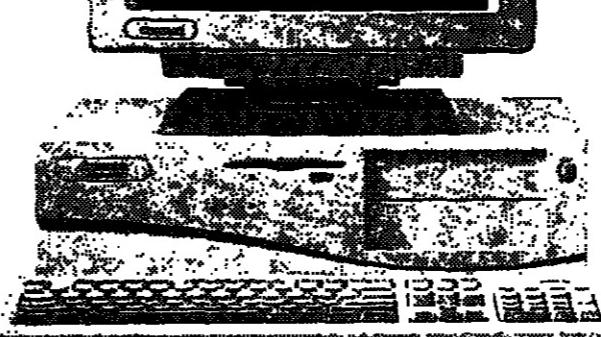
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international

China focuses on next great prize – Taiwan

Teresa Poole
Peking

The hottest selling item at Peking's state-owned Friendship Store these days is a triumphalist 1997 fridge magnet, showing two happy pandas painting the red Chinese flag on top of a Union flag. Another magnet shows a gloomy British bulldog, suitcases in hand, boarding a British flight out while a panda waves him off.

Patriotic fridge magnets aside, the countdown in China started in earnest at the stroke of midnight on Saturday as the electronic clock in Tiananmen Square clicked to show exactly 100 days to go. A group of about 200 students based in from the People's University dutifully broke into song and waved flags in front of the clock, making up with enthusiasm what they lacked in spontaneity. And last night the main television station broadcast the final of a nationwide quiz show in which mainlanders have competed against each other to demonstrate their extraordinary knowledge of Hong Kong trivia.

China's obsession with sov-

ereignty, and the inviolable nature of the "motherland", has for months fuelled a surge in patriotic propaganda. Even the hardline Prime Minister, Li Peng, reportedly thinks the handover might justify lifting the normal ban on fireworks in Peking.

Yet this is one subject on which there is little gap between the official propaganda and the perceptions of ordinary Chinese. There is a genuine patriotic sense that China is healing itself, that it is righting a historical wrong," said one Western diplomat. The British, and the possibility that they might have played some part in Hong Kong's success, have been written out of the official script. In a statement to mark the "100 Days to Go" milestone, the Foreign Ministry spokesman, Cui Tiankai, last week declared: "Over the past 100 years, Hong Kong Chinese built Hong Kong into an international trade, financial and shipping centre, with the special diligence and intelligence of the Chinese people." No mention of any benefits of 150 years of British administration.

From an early age, Chinese

schoolchildren are drilled in the heinous crimes of the British during the Opium Wars, and the unequal treaties which stole part of the motherland. A view of almost a priori sovereign rights is well absorbed, whether the territory in question is Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, Tibet, Xinjiang or the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea. All are deemed "inseparable" parts of China.

China's Defence Minister, Chi Haotian, recently urged the country to "make full use of this historic opportunity and mobilise the whole nation for education in patriotism and national defence". Such sentiments explain why there is unease in Hong Kong at a statement this month by Qian Qichen, the Chinese Foreign Minister, that school textbooks in the territory which do not conform to China's "principles" will have to be "revised". As far as China is concerned, history is written by the sovereign power.

After 1 July, Hong Kong will become another Chinese "internal affair" in which other countries are not allowed to "interfere". Technically, under the Sino-British Joint Declaration

on Hong Kong's transfer, Britain still has a monitoring role through the Sino-British Joint Liaison Group which will exist, and will continue to meet, until 1 January 2000. The Joint Declaration is also registered at the United Nations as an international agreement, one which pledges that the "one country, two systems" arrangement will last for 50 years. In practice,

however, there is little scope for formal international sanction of China if things go wrong.

For Peking, the spotlight of sovereignty ambition will, after 1 July, shift to the recovery of

Macau in 1999, and more importantly to Taiwan. Macau is far less of a trophy than Hong Kong. After the 1974 change of government in Portugal, Lisbon wanted to give Macau back to China, but Peking insisted that nothing could be given back which had not been taken away.

Unlike Hong Kong's New Territories, there was never a formal treaty for Macau, so 20 December 1999 was arbitrarily fixed as the time when this corner of Chinese territory would be removed from "Portuguese administration". That date will mark an end to foreign government of claimed Chinese territory.

Taiwan is a different matter. Since the beginning of this year, all the main speeches by Chinese leaders have spoken of how, after Hong Kong is reunited with the motherland, it should be the turn of Taiwan, still formally considered a re-

gion province by Peking. In his annual state of the nation report this month, said: "The reunification of the motherland is an irreversible historical trend, and any attempt at splitting China, or at the secession of Taiwan, will meet with the firm opposition of the entire Chinese people, including our compatriots in Taiwan."

Those Taiwan compatriots will be among the people most keenly watching developments in Hong Kong after 1 July with every expectation that the reality of "one country, two systems" will not tempt them towards reunification with the Communist-run mainland.

Funding row taints Gore's visit to Asia

Rupert Cormwell
Washington

Almost certainly, China is the last place Vice-President Al Gore would like to be right now. But once made, diplomatic schedules are not easily undone – and so it is that the man described as the ruthless "Solicitor-in-Chief" of Democratic campaign donations last year arrives tonight in the country that stands accused of trying to subvert United States politics in those same elections of 1996.

Mr Gore's trip to East Asia was to have been another building block for a White House run of its own in 2000, paving the way for an exchange of official visits between Presidents Bill Clinton and Jiang Zemin. It was intended as a step towards a new relationship between the world's most powerful country and its most populous, buttressing its own foreign policy credentials in the process.

Alas for such well-laid plans. Washington's vaunted strategy of "constructive engagement" with Peking lies half-crushed by the spreading campaign finance scandal here, of which China's alleged efforts to channel money to Democratic candidates in 1996 are the most serious single component.

In "political" Washington, "China" is probably the dirtiest word around. A host of issues, from human rights to Taiwan to trade, have been exacerbated by the row.

While the Chinese government itself adamantly denies anything wrong doing, even if Peking did allocate \$2m (£1.25m) for the purpose (as has been claimed), neither the FBI nor the Congressional committees probing the affair have produced evidence that donations were actually made. But Mr Gore's dilemma is none the less for that.

Normally, the signing of a huge commercial jet order is just the sort of occasion an ambitious politician like Mr Gore would never miss. This time, though, the Vice-President considered skipping the ceremony for a Chinese purchase of 120 worth of Boeing 777s, given the rampant anti-China mood in Washington. Now seems he will attend, "if the deal is ready".

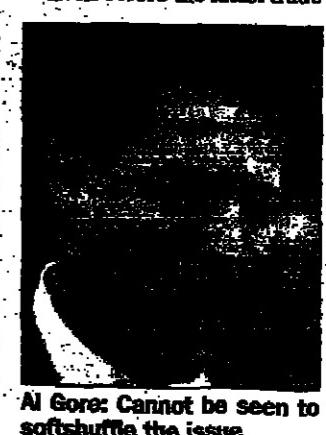
The fundraising row, the Vice-President declared as he

left on Saturday for a first stop in Tokyo, "is not what this trip is about", and indeed considerations of diplomacy would argue for the topic to be avoided. But for his own credibility, he cannot be seen to substitute this issue – while Washington must be doubly wary of any concession that might be construed as having been bought by political donations from Peking.

Nowhere are strains greater than over trade. America's record \$19bn merchandise deficit in January was in good measure due to a 40 per cent surge that month in imports from China, which is on the point of overtaking Japan as owner of the largest single trade surplus with the US.

Heretofore, the argument is Washington has mainly been over linking Peking's human rights performance with the annual extension of its most favoured nation trading status. But the ballooning deficit raises questions over Peking's still more cherished goal of entry into the Geneva-based World Trade Organisation.

Even before the latest trade



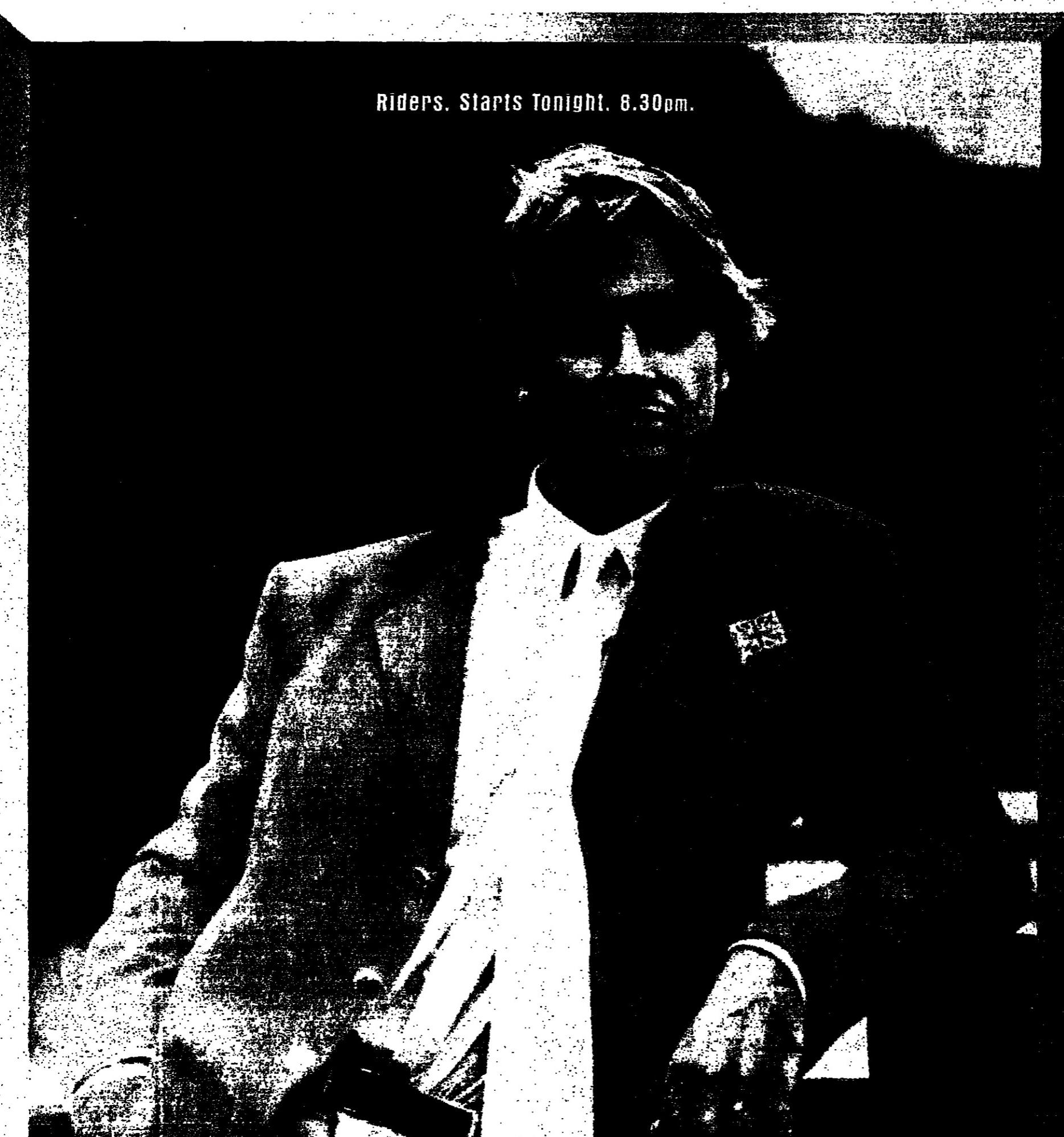
Al Gore: Cannot be seen to soft-shuffle the issue

figures, the anti-China lobby here had been trying to make US approval of China's admission into the WTO conditions on a vote in Congress. Now Mr Gore will carry the message the China must get rid of its tariff and non-tariff barriers to imports from the US, and elsewhere if its goods are to enjoy the lower-tariff "benefits" of WTO membership. The trade imbalance was "unsustainable" for the long-term health of the US economy, said Nancy Pelosi, the California Congresswoman and one of China's harshest critics on Capitol Hill.



Photograph: Reuters

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Hong Kong handover

Silent protests as sun begins to set

Stephen Vines

Hong Kong

Chris Patten, the Governor of Hong Kong, yesterday warned those who will run the colony after it returns to Chinese sovereignty not to tinker with the existing system of government. He said that Hong Kong was like a Rolls Royce. "I don't quite see the point of lifting the bonnet to tinker with the engine". He maintained that the territory needed governing "with a light touch".

The start of the last hundred

days of British rule was marked yesterday with triumphalist celebrations in both the colony and Peking.

But Britain and China remain locked in disagreement over arrangements for the transition of power. Negotiations which ended last week failed to even agree arrangements for the advance stationing of Chinese troops in the colony.

In Hong Kong, thousands of people took part in a series of events to mark the landmark day, while in China students gathered under the clock in

Peking's Tiananmen Square which counts down the seconds until the handover of power. As the clock hit the 100-day mark, they chanted: "Come home, Hong Kong".

Thousands of school children were mobilised in the territory to take part in a symbolic "run to the motherland". Others participated in tree-planting ceremonies and watched lion dances. A television opinion poll showed that 63 per cent of those interviewed were confident about the return to Chinese rule although a larger

number expressed doubts over the long-term future.

Tung Chee-hwa, who will

head the first post-colonial government, went out of his way to stress that his priorities were things like housing and care for the elderly as opposed to wider political issues.

Zhou Nan, director of the Xinhua news agency, or China's *de facto* mission in Hong Kong, said Peking had faith in the abilities of the post-colonial regime. "The central government places great trust in the future Hong Kong government. I think all

sectors in Hong Kong should give their full support," he said in an interview with a local Cantonese-language station.

In Peking, the *People's Daily* newspaper devoted much of its front page to the historic occasion and the role played in it by the nation's paramount leader Deng Xiaoping, who died last month aged 92 before he could see his dream fulfilled. "At this moment we think even more fondly of Deng Xiaoping."

In Hong Kong, a handful of demonstrators, their mouths

taped shut in what they said was a symbol of things to come, took up position in Victoria Park, waving placards to silently condemn China's violent military crackdown at Tiananmen Square in 1989.

Meanwhile, Mr Patten and Martin Lee, leader of the Democratic Party, the colony's largest party, welcomed the initiative taken by *The Independent* in bringing back to life "The World of Lily Wong", a political cartoon strip which was abruptly terminated in May 1995 by the *South China Morning Post*, the colony's largest English-language newspaper.

The death of Lily Wong, created by the Hong Kong-based cartoonist Larry Feign, was widely seen as an indication of growing Chinese influence over the colony's media. The strip will be appearing in *The Independent* until June 30, the last day of British rule.

Welcoming the reappearance of the strip, Mr Patten said: "like a lot of other people in Hong Kong, I used to follow the world of Lily Wong every day. I really missed her when, for

whatever reason, she disappeared from our lives about two years ago. I am glad to hear she is making a comeback in Britain".

Mr Lee said that the strip had

"enabled Hong Kong people to see humour even in the face of blackest events such as the Tiananmen Square crackdown. I am delighted she will continue to do so. Unfortunately, the Chinese leaders and Hong Kong newspaper proprietors don't know Lily Wong as much as the people of Hong Kong do".

In and out guide to the new society

IN

OUT

Amnesia: It is neither fashionable nor necessary to have the ability to recall who were pillars of the colonial establishment and how they have become stalwarts of the new order.

The Island Club: A discrete enclave owned by the family of Tung Chee-hwa, the head of the first post-colonial government. Invitations are at a premium.

Things Chinese: Well, up to a point. Hongkongers are still snooty about their compatriots from across the border, but nowadays keep their tart comments to themselves and profess a great love for the motherland.

Committees: Anyone who's anyone is a member of a Chinese advisory committee. Fortunately there are loads of them and so scope for gaining membership is not too limited.

Colonial memorabilia: Everything, from letter boxes with the royal crest to stamps with the Queen's head, is being avidly hoarded. Interestingly, some of the keenest buyers live on the Chinese mainland.

Optimism: The glorious return to the Motherland is an occasion for celebration. Things can only get better once the colonial shackles are removed.

Chinese values: The new buzz phrase is Chinese values, a sort of Confucian-Communist mélange, with an emphasis on the values of obedience, community interest and respect for authority, as opposed to individual interest.

Kantonghua: The northern Chinese language, which is China's only official language. Hong Kong people have great difficulty speaking it, but they are really trying.

Making money: Some things never change in Hong Kong.

Long memories: Too much was said by Hong Kong leaders in the past which can no longer be said at present. The facility of recall is not required by the new order.

Government House: Applicants used to queue up for invitations to enter the residence of Governor Chris Patten. Invites are now a positive embarrassment.

Things British: Those with British connections are doing their best to keep them under wraps. Various privileges, including special immigration rights, which were enjoyed by Brits have been scrapped.

Gongs, MBEs, CBEs, OBEs: and all other royal awards were once eagerly coveted. Now, some aspirants for high office have gone so far as to relinquish use of their titles.

Colonialism: Regarding colonial memorabilia as anything but quaint history is out. The new order wants to rewrite school text books to ensure that children have a "correct" understanding of the past.

Pessimism: Those expressing doubts about the future have been warned. There is no place for doubters who go round spreading dispondency.

Western values: These are defined by the new order as a combination of anarchism, welfare state-ism and unfettered freedom to criticise for the sake of criticising - an intriguing mixture of Haig-Ashbury and Clement Attlee.

Cantonese: The mother tongue of most Hong Kong people is not exactly out since that is what most people speak, but it cannot be regarded as politically correct.

Making money: Some things never change in Hong Kong.

Stephen Vines

People's Army general tackles military details

Christopher Bellamy
Defence Correspondent
and Stephen Vines

The head of the largest army on earth, the 2-million strong People's Liberation Army of China, is in Britain today on the first visit of its kind since the Tiananmen Square massacre of 1989 soured relations between China and the West.

General Fu Quanyou, China's Chief of the General Staff will this morning see Michael Portillo, the Secretary of State for Defence, and the Chief of Defence Staff, Field Marshal Sir Peter Inge. This afternoon he will visit the Foreign Office.

The Ministry of Defence yesterday refused to say why the general was visiting, but the timing of the visit and his conversations with Mr Portillo and Field Marshal Inge indicate he will be discussing the transfer of authority for the security of Hong Kong from the British Armed Forces to the PLA, exact details of which still have not been worked out, senior defence sources said last week.

The last-but-one round of talks in the Anglo-Chinese Joint Liaison Group (JLG), the diplomatic body handling Hong Kong's return to China, failed last week to agree arrangements for the advance stationing of Chinese troops in the colony.

Britain's chief negotiator, Hugh Davies, said the failure of three days of talks, the 39th round in 15-year-long negotiations, was especially "disappointing".

China also expressed regret at the lack of agreement. Hong Kong's China-backed *Wen Wei Po* newspaper reported on Saturday that defeat matters

were one key area of outstanding problems, along with Vietnamese asylum-seekers, of whom 6,000 are left in the colony, and the transfer of Hong Kong government files.

"We are now in the crucial stage of the process," Mr Davies said in a statement. "We need to close the remaining gaps."

The Chinese delegation blamed Britain for the lack of progress. "The Chinese side has made the greatest possible effort to accommodate the concerns of the British side, but the British side is still adopting disappointing delaying tactics and trying to establish linkage between unrelated issues," said China's ambassador to London, Zhao Jijia, who heads the Chinese delegation.

On an advance guard of Chinese troops, Mr Davies said the two sides had narrowed their differences but had been unable to reach agreement. "Britain has long taken the position that some advance parties are a good idea," he said. "The problems lie in the size of those parties and the timing of their arrival."

General Fu Quanyou, who arrived in London on Saturday, begins a series of regional visits tomorrow, designed to acquaint him with British Army equipment and training.

Born in 1930, the general joined the PLA in 1946 and served as an infantry officer. He was commander of the Chengdu military region, facing India, which merged with the Kunming military region, facing Burma, Laos and Vietnam, in the mid-1980s. He became a general in 1993. He has been Chief of the General Staff since September 1995.

Eve of empire: Members of the Black Watch waiting for six o'clock to chime before lowering the flags at the cenotaph in central Hong Kong. The colony will be handed over to China on 1 July

Photograph: Tom Pilston

No holds barred in cartoon swan song

Jojo Moyes

Hong Kong

There is nothing obvious that marks Lily Wong as a threat to national security. The civil-service secretary, who lives with her American husband and their baby in a tiny flat in Kowloon, could be said to live the life of any number of Hong Kong Chinese women. She loves her family, means about pollution, cares about her appearance and drives a hard bargain. Yet almost two years ago the cartoon character was killed off, an apparent victim of her newspaper's determination not to upset the Chinese government as the handover drew near.

Because despite her innocuous lifestyle, "The World of Lily Wong", described as the "Doomsday" of the East, always made political waves in Hong Kong.

For eight years the strip poked fun at East-West relations as well as at Deng Xiaoping and the People's Liberation Army. Hong Kong Democrat Martin Lee described it as depicting "with sometimes devastating accuracy the foibles of the Hong Kong and Chinese governments, Hong Kong's political classes and ordinary Hong Kong people".

"That was my brief, to sail close to the wind," says the cartoon's creator, Larry Feign. A 41-year-old American, Feign came to Hong Kong in 1985 and

created Lily soon after. He has frequently been asked whether Lily was based on his Chinese wife, Cathy, but denies this. "Anything coming from Lily Wong comes from me," he says.

Lily had started as a satire on Hong Kong life, but John Dux, Feign's first editor at the *South China Morning Post* in Hong Kong, encouraged the cartoonist to be overtly political. "He used to tell me, 'make it meaner, make it nastier. If you're not getting at least one hate letter a day you're not doing your job'."

The first signs that this freedom might change came in

1989, when, Feign says, he was asked to "go easier" on China. The following week's cartoons, which dealt with pro-China, anti-democracy business people in Hong Kong, required a certain amount of "clearance" before printing.

But it was in May 1995, prior to publication of a strip which dealt with the use of executed prisoners' organs for transplant, that Feign found his contract abruptly terminated, in a decision widely believed to be political.

The *South China Morning Post*'s editor-in-chief, David Armstrong, ascribed his decision

to cost-cutting, despite the obvious profitability of the newspaper (one of the most profitable in the world). Feign promptly offered to continue at a lower rate but this was declined.

"No one ever wanted to rock the boat in Hong Kong but it's worse than ever. I figured all along that Lily Wong would be cancelled, but I was surprised by the timing and the way in which it was done," he says.

Since then sources at the Post have said the cartoon was "unpopular" — a charge Feign rebuts, pointing to the continuing sales of Lily compilation

books. "In Hong Kong English-language books tend to be considered 'best sellers' if you manage to sell over 2,000. My best-selling *Lily Wong* book sold 24,000. I have 11 books out, still all in print, still doing well," he says. "Without Lily Wong in the paper I thought the interest would die, but it's really heartening for me to know people still enjoy her."

It is just as well for Feign that his books do well; since the strip was dropped he has not been able to get work as a graphic artist within the territory. "Since Lily Wong left print I've been

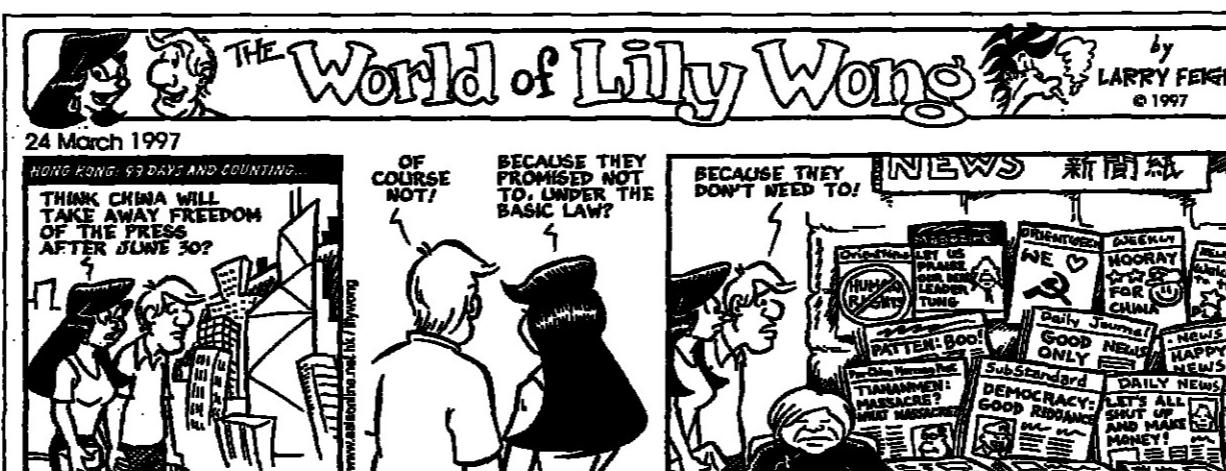
doing freelance illustration for books and corporate stuff, illustrating books mostly. I'm increasingly involved in the World Wide Web."

"But I don't actually do anything for anyone here. I've been blacklisted across the board. I can't even find commercial work for company newsletters because they're so scared of having this 'notorious anti-Communist' even remotely connected with their company. Which is so absurd but that's the way it is. That's the state of mind here."

Feign does not know where his future lies after 1 July. But until then *The Independent* is helping him to resurrect Lily Wong for the 100 days up to the handover. It will be her swan song, and out of the confines of her natural environment, she can be as irreverent and as political as in her heyday — a prospect the cartoonist relishes.

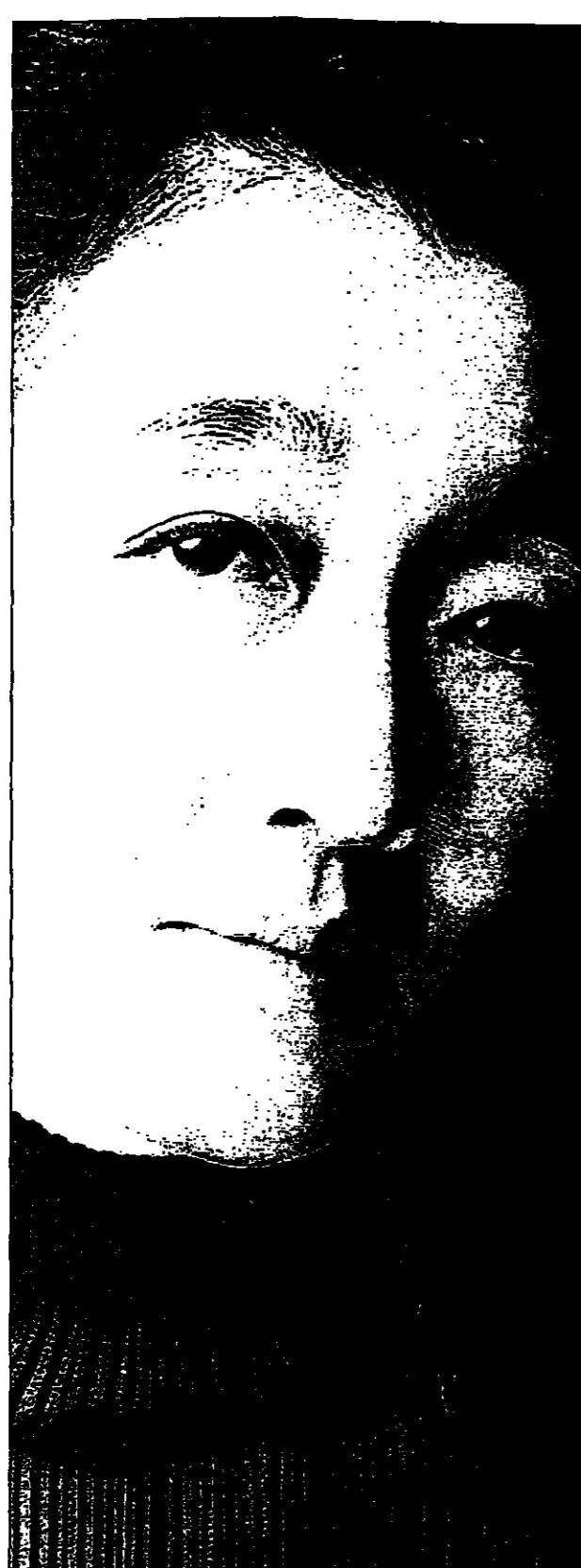
"A political cartoonist in a civilised country can be quite influential, can really raise the hackles of people in power. Look at Steve Bell and John Major's underpants, or the members of the Bush family who stated publicly how much they hated Doonesbury. I've missed Lily. She'll be in the lime-light for three months which is exciting for me," he says. "In fact I'll be more free than I was. I won't pull any punches."

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Japan's strange, exotic bird: Mitsuko Uchida

Taking as long as it takes

'What's the hurry' might well be Mitsuko Uchida's motto. As with tea-making, so with music. It's all in the preparation. And it all leads to perfection. By Edward Seckerson

First the tea-making ritual. A little something carried over from her Japanese heritage. Darjeeling First Flush (the chosen blend) is meticulously measured into an empty muslin teabag, the filtered water boiled but gently cooled between jug and teapot. Then the infusion. Four minutes, precisely. After three minutes, "it's too much of a wake-up tea"; after five, "already too bitter". So, four minutes. Choose cup (size first, then colour), remove teabag, dispose. Serve. Enjoy.

As and with tea, so with music. Preparing it, sharing it, takes time. Patience. This is Mitsuko Uchida. Precise, uncompromisingly passionate. The tea-making ritual - with its studied but enthusiastic commentary - will have been repeated many times for other visitors, but each time will be the first time. The flavour of the tea depends upon it. Knowing just how much care has been lavished on its preparation only adds to the enjoyment. Uchida knows that. She can make an occasion of the simplest task. She has presence. A quality. And that quality is mirrored in her piano playing.

So, how to define it? Words won't really suffice, though we can try a few: supple, rapt, searching, dream-like. But volatile, too. You see it in her manner, you catch it in her conversation. One moment she will be quiet, confidential, almost conspiratorial - as if sharing the secrets of the universe with you alone. The words will be carefully considered, sparingly used, a series of portentous *halitus* separated by equally portentous silences. But then something will be said, something implied, to excite her, provoke her, and the new idea will detonate with such force that every word is suddenly an exclamation. So she thinks and speaks rather as she plays - a familiar trait among musicians but more pronounced in her case - and she plays in such a way as to persuade you that every phrase is precisely as you would choose to play it were you to do so. That's rare.

Uchida has just emerged from a period of "hibernation". No public performances, only private ones. This is a biannual occurrence. For two-month periods every year she accepts no engagements. It's true that every second summer she'll take off to the Marlboro Festival in Vermont, there to make chamber music "just for the sheer hell of it", but working vacations are generally spent tucked up in her little mews house off the Portobello Road, taking stock, recharging the batteries, learning new repertoire. Her shortlist of priorities currently reads: the Brahms and Bartók Second Concertos, the Chopin Preludes, the Beethoven Diabelli Variations and the 48 Preludes and Fugues (to be ready in time for her 70th birthday in the year 2018), and the Ligeti Concerto. While "slaving" over the Birtwistle Concerto a couple of years back she decided that she would learn at least one major contemporary piece every three years. Maybe open a few ears.

She loves these sabbaticals "at home". They are so much a part of what she is about: a balanced, orderly existence with time to think, time to dream. And London is home. As witness her unshakable allegiance to "Marks & Sparks" (the English colloquialism slip deliciously, eccentrically, into her conversation). She beigrades time spent travelling. A typical day in the life of Mitsuko Uchida begins slowly. She gets up "s-l-o-w-y" (her intonation tells you just how slowly). A first cup of tea (prepared, of course, as above), then back and forth to bed with mail or newspapers. Then brunch - "only a bite, because otherwise your energies go into digestion" (before a concert she'll enjoy a single Béchamel (bittermilk) - a quick glance at "Modesty Blaise" in the *Evening Standard*, a hand or two of bridge (don't look for reason in the apparent incongruities here), and off across the courtyard on the short walk to her studio, where two Steinway

concert grands - her own - await. Right now she's preparing for her Barbican Celebrity Recital on Wednesday. A typical Uchida programme: it opens like the proverbial floodgates, with the Berg Sonata, continues with Schumann's David und Goliath - "two true romantics", she says, "the only thing separating them is about 100 years" - and concludes with Beethoven's last sonata, Op 111, its pearly trills stretching all the way to infinity. She's played that piece often, though intermittently, over the past 20 or so years and each time she does, another problem gets solved. She won't enlarge upon what it is this time - not while the work is still in progress - but she's happy to explain the process: "I just play, and if it doesn't sound right, I play again, or I dream and play, just let it happen, until me, the listener - not me, the player - thinks, 'Ah, that was it!' And then me, the player, reconstructs exactly why it was right. Sometimes this process takes months, years. And then you want to find out why it took so long to settle why you could not do it then but can now!"

It's this delicate balance between emotion and intellect, instinct and reason, intuition and calculation that gives Uchida's work its edge. She describes in painstaking detail how she believes she's finally found the solution to a single bar of Beethoven's Emperor Concerto. It's the moment where the second subject modulates from B minor to B major and it all happens in one tiny phrase. She used to feel that phrase as a crescendo, until she realised that in order to stay, as Beethoven requests, *pianissimo*, then you must imply, if anything, a *diminuendo*. B major suddenly opens up. It's a different glow, she says, with the effusiveness of one who's just happened upon the lost chord. But it's almost as thrilling to hear her talk about it as play it. Almost. "Thank God," she says. "Otherwise we'd always be talking, not playing."

Either way, she's a natural

communicator. With her audience, with the composers she plays. Not a week goes by that she doesn't communicate with "her composers": Bach, Mozart, Schubert, Beethoven. She is tirelessly inquisitive on their behalf. She will repeat the same phrase over and over, for as long as it takes to reveal itself. The process never bores her; provided the music doesn't (and she has her mental blocks - Rachmaninov is one).

Even as a child she was happy to explore her favourite stories again and again, hoping against hope that she might discover something new. Childhood was a tale of two cultures. Her father was a Japanese diplomat. Which means that there was life beyond the clouds, beyond Japan. The family landed in Vienna when Mitsuko was 12. A lucky escape, she now believes. She found her "first love" there. Franz Schubert. This month sees the release of her first Schubert album - the Impromptus Op 90 and Op 142. It's taken a while, or rather it's taken as long as it's taken, to get this music into her way. And to find the right piano for it. The piano in question resides in Uchida's studio, and it goes by the name of "Chaliapin".

Inside the studio, Uchida feels her way through the opening page of Schubert's last sonata, music caught somewhere between love and sorrow. (Schubert's words). The trill in the left hand rolls out like distant thunder. The sound of the instrument is indeed rich and welcoming, warm and subtle like the great Russian bass whose name he shares. "Chaliapin" has, says Uchida, settled down nicely since his new hammer-heads were installed. Her piano technique has developed the sound according to his character (very important - you cannot impose character upon an instrument - each one is different). He sounded particularly well in the Musikverein, Vienna (Uchida's Schubert recording took place). Almost too warm, in fact. "There is usually some element of frost in

Pas de trois of the personalities

Optimistic Japanese ladies stood in the Opera House foyer clutching polite notices that read "Want to buy ticket please", and there was a salty smell of tout in the air. The Royal Ballet has long been fighting a rearguard action against any sort of personality cult among its dancers, but there is no doubt that the prospect of Dancer Bussell, Jonathan Cope and Sylvie Guillem in *La Bayadère* is a proposition that shifts tickets.

The solemnity of her entrance as the veiled temple dancer is so profound that the capacity audience sat on its hands as if reluctant to break the spell, already caught up in the drama of her performance. A convincing rebuttal, surely, to anyone who complains that she allows her starry personality to obliterate the roles she dances. On Saturday she was Nikiya, whose lover, Solor, forsakes her for Gamzatti. Murdered by her rival, she is reconciled to Solor in a dream and the pair are finally united in death after his wedding to the Rajah's daughter is disrupted by an earthquake.

Guillem manages to combine spiritual purity with a normal, girl-

rehearsed and hit just the right note of high-Victorian melancholy.

Our turbaned love-rat was Jonathan Cope, who showed Guillem off to perfection. His partnership with Darcey Bussell was fractionally less successful. The wedding scene prefigures Petipa's Black Swan *pas de deux* in which our hero is also seduced by the sexy virtuosity of the wrong woman. Unfortunately Bussell's ravishing smiles are of a general nature and she makes little attempt to cement the affections of her stolen warrior. Her dancing, though masterly in places, was slightly uneven. In the wedding scene she had trouble with the beguiling sequence of accelerating and decelerating pirouettes. Perhaps she is saving herself for her Nikiya on 4 April, perhaps she feels that the role is a secondary one. That need not be the case. Covent Garden has seen Guillem dance both women and her reading of the spoilt beauty definitely qualifies for equal billing. Gamzatti is a complex character at a total loss to understand how anyone could prefer a mere dancing girl to a beautiful, rich Rajah's daughter with 180-degree extensions. In an ideal world, I'd like to see Guillem dancing opposite herself.

Performances 25-27, 31 Mar, 1, 3-4, 10 Apr. Booking: 0171-304 4000

DANCE

La Bayadère

Royal Opera House, London

ish sensuality. The strength and clarity of her dancing is a constant source of wonder, her *chaines* turns unravel at dizzying speed. These marvels combine thrillingly with a very modern ability to just walk naturally, arms dangling by her sides in dejected reflection.

To conjure such a mood she has

only to contemplate the production. The flaws in Makarova's 1989 version are often blamed on 19th-century theatrical taste but the Kirov's London seasons of *La Bayadère* have shown that if you trust the ballet and perform it wholeheartedly it can be immensely powerful. The Royal Ballet's rule of thumb seems to be: when in doubt, ham it up. Gary Avis's High Brahmin is a painful example of this. The vengeful priest destroyed by desire is a pivotal role in the drama but Avis throws it away with a few camp histrionics. Happily, the exquisite Kingdom of the Shades scene was well-

rehearsed and hit just the right note of high-Victorian melancholy.

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Louise Levene The radiant corps de ballet of "La Bayadère"



Photograph: Laurie Lewis

Trial, error and overexposure

THEATRE

Exposition

Arts Theatre, London

My most embarrassing evening was at the Man in the Moon theatre at a performance of *Judgement*, Barry Collins's epic monologue which cast the audience as the tribunal meant to pass sentence on an officer who has had to resort to cannibalism.

That evening, the jury consisted of just me and (I know, it sounds far-fetched) a Japanese tourist. I spent the interval praying that he wouldn't leave.

I was reminded of this incident at the Arts Theatre on Friday night when only around 20 people turned up to see Tom Minter's *Exposition* and many of these appeared to be attached to the author and the director, Areta Breeze, also present, swelling the throng. I'd been seated in the midst of this evidently necessary support group but managed to relocate myself a couple of rows back. The performance hadn't been going long before I realised that my preferred position would be sinking quietly beneath the floorboards.

It's not the subject (the homo-erotic bond between

two friends in disintegrating

marriages that have been

based on lies) nor (though one

of the players is badly miscast)

it is the acting that has you

shiftinig in your seat. The cause for dismay is the unvarying

woodiness of the treatment,

and the way that Minter's dia-

logue drains plausibility and

point from the situations at the

same time as Breeze's poten-

tious direction is strenuously

hinting at hidden depths.

The play alternates occa-

sions where the two couples

meet, or fail to meet, for

their regular outings at the cin-

ema and theatre with scenes

where we overhear the men

making private phone calls. In

the first stretch we discover

that Niall Ashdown's William

is a failed writer, still deludedly

seeking greatness and bettering

off his teacher wife (Laur-

endeman), and that Trevor

Seller's James, a tetchy self-

important right-wing barri-

ter, is well on the way to

disastrously bordering on

Patrick Hamilton's *Rope*, they

look forward to a kinky tale

of renewed intimacy and of

capitalising on the crime, turn-

ing it to a publishable rather

than a punishable occurrence.

Still, literally unspeakable

dialogue in which characters

say things like "Since the fair

days of collegiate youth" and

"It's been ages since I've felt

this potent" don't help you to

credit the relationship between

the male pair, either way back

when or now. James says that

he loved the fire his friend had

as an undergraduate, but -

notwithstanding the fact that

the depredations of time are a</p

Interview



Deborah Ross talks to

DANNY BAKER

No, insists Danny Baker, he was not with Chris Evans and Gazza when the "alleged woman-slapping incident took place. Yes, he knows *The Sun* had him there. And, yes, he knows *The Sun* also had him "sprawled" across the bonnet of Gazza's limo. But it was rubbish. Sure, he was with them the previous night. But on this particular evening he was firmly back in Deptford, watching his son in a school play. "Yeah, yeah, I know, it sounds too cute. But it's true!" he cries.

He then says he is very cross. What, at Gazza for doing what he is said to have done? No, at *The Sun* for having him sprawled across a bonnet when, in fact, he was doing no such thing. "What are the children at me kids' schools gonna think?" he asks. That you are one of the lads, I suggest, thinking I am being helpful. "One of the lads?" he howls, even more crossly. "One of the lads?" he repeats now agitated. "I hate lads and the whole laddish movement. It's one-dimensional, innit? It's crass and it ain't me."

"Yeah, I like football. Yeah,

I talk the way I do. But that don't mean I'm a lad. What you do ain't who you are. I don't even go out very much, as it appears I can't see the point in pouncing about down The Groucho. I prefer to be at home with Wend and the kids. But because I'm on telly and I talk like I do everyone thinks he's just a professional Cockney, isn't he? It's the middle classes who always say it. Why? Because they feel guilty about the working classes, don't they? So they say, that Danny Baker, she's just a loudmouth you. People in telly are just as bad. I get stacks of offers for terrible people shows. Or they say things to me like 'My grandmother worked down the coalmines in Durham', and other patronising stuff like that and..."

All right, Danny, put a jellied eel in it. Or, failing that, tell me something about yourself which will prove, once and for all, that you're not just one of the boys. "Look, this isn't something I want to address," he replies impatiently. "I mean, I've got nothing to prove here."

The thing about Danny—and Chris and Gazza now I think about it—is that, aside from the rage that seems to go on inside them, they are, all three, brilliant... and they are also complete plonkers. On the brilliant side, Danny's verbal dexterity is quite something. His mouth and brain work together at an awesome speed. He can talk off the cuff for astonishing periods and can, certainly, be brilliantly funny. When he wrote for *NME*, he was superb. His early radio stuff was thrilling, as is his current Sunday-morning pop show on *GLR*. But for everything that's been good, he seems to have done two things that are bad, particularly on the telly. Danny, I ask, do you think you've been wise in your career choices? In particular, I'm thinking of the TV chat show of a couple of years back, which wasn't so much disappointing as plain embarrassing.

"Look, the BBC phoned me up and said would you like to do a chat show, and I said yes, and that was it. Although I'm actually the last person who should ever do a chat show, I don't listen. So yes, I've done complete turkeys. But so what if something goes down the toilet? I can't plot my copy book because I've never thought of myself as 'aving a copy book.'

Actually, I don't think he does care terribly. Which is a shame, really, because he's too often too good for whatever it is he's presenting. Although *Radio 5* would not necessarily agree. Earlier this month, they fired him from his Wednesday-night football phone-in programme after an incredibly nasty tirade against the referee, whose controversial penalty decision gave Chelsea victory over Leicester City in the FA Cup. "But I didn't tell Leicester fans to hit the referee. I just said I would understand if they did," he now says.

Can you ever go too far? I ask. No, he replies, you cannot. "You either do a good show or a lousy show and that's it." What if someone were to shout that referee, would he feel



Not one of the boys: 'I hate lads and the whole laddish movement,' says Danny Baker. It's one-dimensional, innit? It's crass and it ain't me' Glynn Griffiths

A few quiet words with Danny Baker

responsible? "Nope." Does he ever suffer any self-doubt whatsoever? "No, never. I don't think anything I do requires it. What would I have self-doubts about? Doing Daz adverts?"

Certainly, his belief in himself is unshakeable. He's always right. By sacking him, the BBC have been fly-livered "weasels".

And, as if to prove it, he has since gone even further on his new *Talk Radio* slot. "Yes, it's a witch-hunt," he declared gaily, while adding that the referee, Mike Reed, "should be thrashed from the grass like a grouch." He apparently thinks he can get away with anything, no matter the consequences, which neatly brings us back to Chris and Gazza.

Danny does seem very in thrall to Gazza and Chris. Gazza, he boasts happily, kins on his sofa when in town. And, he *adores* admiringly, he's the perfect house guest. He holds his blanket in the morning. He washes up his own cereal bowl. When he first started coming round, he was still having the odd cigarette, but he always went out on to the patio to smoke. I thought, "What a polite bloke." But Danny, I cry, he's not very polite to women. He may even have hit one or two recently. Doesn't that count with you?

Danny's a torrential talker. You don't so much have a conversation with him as take a veritable battering. He is like this even when, say, he's at home of an evening with Wend, Sonny and Bonnie. "Up, I'm relentless," he replies cheerfully.

He was a clever kid, a voracious reader (still is) who passed his 11-plus but refused to go to grammar school because none of his mates was going there. He ended up at West Greenwich Secondary Modern where he was brilliant at everything—*"I loved my reports, which always started with Position in Year: First"*—but left at 15. He says that if he'd stayed on they'd have eventually found him work in a bank, which wouldn't have been for him.

His house is disappointingly tasteless inside. There are no swirly-patterned carpets, nasty ornaments or Dralon suites. Instead, the living room has a Moroccan feel to it—tapestries and cushions adorn the deliciously plump, white sofa where Gazza kips—while, in the kitchen, all sorts of creamy-coloured handmade-looking things are going on. No, having a nice front room and kitchen does not make you middle class in any way. "Why do people always think the working classes can't have money or taste? Being working class isn't about that. It's about calling dinner 'tea' and forgetting to put your cap back on the saucer in a restaurant."

Danny was born to Fred, a docker, and Elizabeth who, at one time, worked for Shuttleworth's, the chocolate makers. As a young boy, he used to wait excitedly for his mum to come back from work so he could smell the undersides of her Dr Scholls. "They always smelt of leather," he now says.

"Can you ever go too far? I ask. No, he replies, you cannot.

"You either do a good show or a lousy show and that's it."

What if someone were to shout that referee, would he feel

old jeans. "Yeah, nice, aren't they?" Chris gave 'em me. Someone sent them to him and he didn't want them so he said I could have 'em." Then, with some excitement, he adds. "Yes, Danny Baker smelt the soles of his mum's Dr Scholls. Now, what do you think Dr Freud would make of that?" Quite a lot, I imagine.

The youngest of three kids, he has an older sister, Sharon, and did have an older brother. But Michael died when he was 29 and Danny was 24. A docker, too, he simply went to bed one night and was dead by morning. Danny says he isn't too sure what he died of.

"There was a lot of wailing going on, so I never looked into it." He thinks it had something to do with his sinuses, being sick and then choking on the sick. All the Baker children have sinus problems. That's why, he says, he fiddles with his nose a lot when he isn't talking. Which isn't very often.

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He was a clever kid, a voracious reader (still is) who passed his 11-plus but refused to go to grammar school because none of his mates was going there. He ended up at West Greenwich Secondary Modern where he was brilliant at everything—*"I loved my reports, which always started with Position in Year: First"*—but left at 15. He says that if he'd stayed on they'd have eventually found him work in a bank, which wouldn't have been for him.

And, anyway, by this time he'd already "caught the whiff of rock 'n' roll". He worked in a West End record shop then co-founded *Sniffin' Glue*, a cleverly post-modern punk magazine. The next stop was *NME*, which he describes as absolutely the best period of his life. "It was a delirious time," he sighs nostalgically.

Originally employed to answer the phones, he quickly graduated to writing witty picture captions then flying all over the world to interview pop stars. His interview with Michael Jackson—who was desperate to discuss *Benny Hill*—went straight into the legend books. Danny became the funniest, most popular writer they ever had, even though he had a blasé attitude

to fame.

And, Chris? Well, if Danny and Chris got any more bosomily they'd become one fat bloke with a red, sticky-top harbo. Danny, the scriptwriter for Chris's Channel 4 show, *27/ Friday*, while Chris's company, Ginger Productions, produces Danny's new Saturday football show on *Talk Radio*.

"Yeah, we're extraordinarily close. We're in and out of each other's houses all the time. Chris spent last Christmas Day with us." Today, Danny is even wearing a pair of Chris's shoes, a fact I chance upon when I admire the creamy suede loafers poking incongruously out from under the hem of his Dr Scholls. "They always smell

'I wish that my child could feel pain'

A rare disorder leaves children unaware of physical suffering. By Glenda Cooper

Given one wish, most parents would plump for their children never to know pain and suffering. Yet two British mothers could not wish for anything less.

Three-year-old Hannah Thompson and two-year-old Haaris Kureshi appeared to be completely normal children when they were born. But both suffer from an extremely rare genetic disorder, of which there are just 30 reported cases in the world: the inability to feel pain.

No matter how badly they injure themselves, no message gets through to the brain to alert them to the danger they are in. So they mutilate themselves unaware of the harm they are doing. Hannah has bitten the tips off her fingers, bitten the tip off her tongue and last year bit off her thumb, all the while never shedding a tear.

Hannah's family could not bear to watch her destroy her body and decided to have all her teeth removed. "It was a very hard decision to make," says Charlotte Thompson, her mother. "She had lovely teeth, perfectly healthy teeth... but she was spending two out of four weeks in hospital after biting herself. The way I looked at it was once her fingers and tongue went that was it, they were gone. At least she's going to get another set of teeth when she's older."

Congenital indifference to pain is part of a group of conditions known as hereditary sensory neuropathies and was first reported in 1932, with the case of a man known as The Human Pin-cushion, who toured music-halls sticking pins into himself. The condition is thought to be caused by the failure of beta-endorphin—a substance that occurs naturally in the body and modulates pain sensations—to register pain. It is incurable. Similar experiences are found in older diabetes sufferers or leprosy victims.

"Pain is probably one of the most important sensations that we have, because without it we would damage ourselves irreversibly," says Stephen Green, consultant paediatrician at St Luke's Bradford, who treats Haaris. "It is essential for the survival of the species."

Children who suffer from the condition can easily be mistaken for victims of abuse taken its toll on her: "I became very depressed, became very agoraphobic." People's reactions accentuated her isolation. "I'd take Hannah out shopping and she'd be biting her tongue and have blood pouring down her mouth. She'd often be covered in bandages and I'd hear people, particularly older people talking about her saying, 'Look at that poor child, she must have been battered.'

There is as yet no treatment for these children's condition. Dr Green says, although some tests have been done in France with the drug Naloxone, which lowers pain thresholds, and is usually prescribed for those who have been taking opiates.

But little work has been done on the condition and until some sort of treatment is found, Charlotte and Nusrath must face years of worry trying to protect their children from themselves. "I think the day Haaris falls and cuts from pain would be the best day of my life," says Nusrath. "It would mean I could cuddle him and when he stopped I would know he was OK."

Hannah and Haaris's story is told in 'Here and Now' on BBC1 tonight at 7.30.

There are also psychological

difficulties for sufferers and their parents. "How do you discipline children like this?" asks Dr Green. "Many parents still administer a smack across the knuckles if their child goes near something dangerous but it doesn't work on these children. And they may develop behavioural difficulties. A child could say, 'If you don't give me what I want, I'll stick my hand in the fire.' They won't feel the pain but the mother will."

Charlotte, who has spent £6,000 on a safe, padded playroom for Hannah, says that looking after her daughter has



Hannah Thompson (top) and Haaris Kureshi: their extremely rare condition can easily be mistaken for abuse

taken its toll on her: "I became very depressed, became very agoraphobic." People's reactions accentuated her isolation. "I'd take Hannah out shopping and she'd be biting her tongue and have blood pouring down her mouth. She'd often be covered in bandages and I'd hear people, particularly older people talking about her saying, 'Look at that poor child, she must have been battered.'

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There are also psychological

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the leader page

Today's student: well-qualified in harsh realities

Britain's students, it seems, have grown up. Perhaps it is time for the rest of us to do so too, and rethink our attitudes to this important subgroup of our society.

As we report today, most students take their work seriously, are not deep in debt and no more likely than other young people to be out of their heads on legal and illegal drugs. Yet the legacy of 1968 lingers on. That was the year when "student" became loaded with meanings other than simply "one who studies". It was one of those dawns – false, as it turned out – when it was all right to be alive, but to be young was very all right. For many, it was a liberating experience, just to think for a short time that they were living through a revolutionary moment, and to experiment with alternative values and other hallucinogens.

But for most, it was never really like that, as Jack Straw and Tony Blair will testify. Mr Straw, a serious-minded student leader at the time, was never even offered a joint. Mr Blair himself was too young for 1968, but was a serious-minded student in the early 1970s. He even took singing in the Ugly Rumours seriously. And he didn't do drugs, either. A few of those who are asking the electorate for permission to run the country may have become social conservatives in between being sent down from Oxford and election to the Shadow Cabinet, but Messrs Straw

and Blair have been moderate puritans all along.

Today's survey suggests that they are more typical of students, then and now, than popular stereotypes allow. However, there have been important changes in students' attitudes since 1968. It is not just the idealism that has taken on a more pragmatic character. The idea of learning for its own sake is fast disappearing, too. This started to happen quite suddenly in 1980, when students peered out of their ivory towers and noticed the long tail of the queue of unemployed people stretching towards them. Student life lost much of its romance, where it was dominated by job plans and curriculum vitae-filling. But, as with most losses of innocence, this was a necessary evil. It might have been possible to preserve a purist notion of higher education as a good in itself when it was restricted to a tiny elite, but now that a third of over-18s are full-time students, economic factors must predominate. Taxpayers might be prepared to pay for a few of the very cleverest to study things of no economic value, or, like Ruth Lawrence and her Knot Theory, which might or might not prove valuable. But for the rest of us, economics is our foundation course.

It was economics that drove the expansion of higher education – young people were well aware that higher qualifications would decide not just



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how much they earned, but whether they got a job at all, and so led a demand-led system. But the expansion of higher education is one of many achievements that this Government seems unable to take credit for, because it does not really know whether it approves of students. It is hampered by out-of-date notions of who students are and what they are like. Even the Labour Party, for which education is the Holy Trinity, refuses to come to terms with the reality of student life today.

It is New Labour, specifically, which declared that the competitiveness of

British workers in world markets depended above all on the quality of their education. It was Gordon Brown who repeated the mantra of Robert Reich, Bill Clinton's Labor Secretary, that you have to "earn more to earn more". So you would expect Labour to have important things to say about students and their academics. No such luck. Mr Brown has some bright ideas for a "University for Industry", and education or training would be one of the options for young people no longer allowed to claim dole. But on the question of funding for higher education, as on so many other subjects, New

Labour has successfully closed down the debate.

After a few tentative hints at something more, Labour has settled into a familiar posture of agreeing with the Government on the principle of student loans, while criticising the precise mechanisms currently in place – as usual, minding its tongue on the basis of "not in front of the electorate". This is hardly the way to construct that "giant confident morning" feeling on 2 May.

One of the key findings of today's survey is that the average student expects to leave university with a debt of £2,360. In relation to the lifetime advantage conferred by higher education, this is an astonishingly small amount of money, and it is high time this was recognised.

Of course students should pay for the cost of their own higher education, which ensures – as today's study confirms – that they are able to enter the labour market at around national average earnings. And of course the government should be able to devise a loan scheme that would not discourage students from poor families from going to university. It may be that a system of repayment through the tax system, linked to future earnings, would be the best way to do this, as well as taking into account the fact that many students may want to repay their debt to the community in some form of low-

paid public service rather than cash.

The main objection to this reform is that learning is valuable to society as a whole irrespective of its economic utility – precisely the attitude that students themselves have, by and large, shed. This does not mean that they have lost their love of learning, or their idealism. These are qualities that ought to flourish among young people, and even older ones, whether or not they are in full-time education. They are not commodities that require public subsidy.

Dumb animals and whales

We humans must make a pitiful sight. For centuries, and with accelerating ferocity, we have destroyed other species and degraded their environment. But when one sperm whale gets stuck in the Firth of Forth, heaven, earth and the Deep Sea World aquarium are moved to try to guide it back to the freedom of the seas. The whale, aided more by another whale than by humankind, swims off into the open water, and there is much rejoicing in the most sophisticated part of the animal kingdom. Then what does the ungrateful animal do? Goes back and gets stuck again. That will teach us to think we know better.

Union history belies Blair fairy tale

Sir: Our daughter has just celebrated her 18th birthday, and of course she cannot remember the view from the window of the hospital in which she was born – but we can! The cold March dawn revealed a man-made landscape of piles of rotting rubbish, and a team of mechanical diggers was busy digging pits into which the hospital refuse was being buried.

By cruel contrast, the human dead lay unburied as Britain was paralysed by the "winter of discontent", which was in truth a euphemism for anarchy. The full force of the unions was unleashed on Callaghan's government, forced to go cap in hand to the International Monetary Fund for finance.

It was a humiliating spectacle, and the country in its misery ached for a change – in 1979 our prayers were answered and change came. Our daughter is a true child of Thatcher who like thousands more has only known Conservative government, and we believe articulates for her whole generation when she asks, "How bad can Labour be?" Soon we suspect they will find out.

It is more than likely that students will turn out en masse to support Tony Blair, but before they cast that all-important vote perhaps they should spare a moment to consider the positive and undeniable achievements of the past 18 years.

When our daughter's generation buy a house, they will benefit from the lowest mortgage rate for the past 30 years, and from their earnings will be deducted the lowest basic rate for over half a century. We are No 1 in Europe for foreign investment, one in three of the population now go on to higher education, and as a nation we have lost fewer working days through strikes since records began. State monopolies have crumbled and the concept of choice is now the norm.

Of course there have been mistakes, naked arrogance, crass misjudgements, disappointments and, worst of all, broken promises. We have all been hurt to a greater or lesser extent, but taken as a whole our daughter's childhood and adolescence has been played out against a background of stable and competent government.

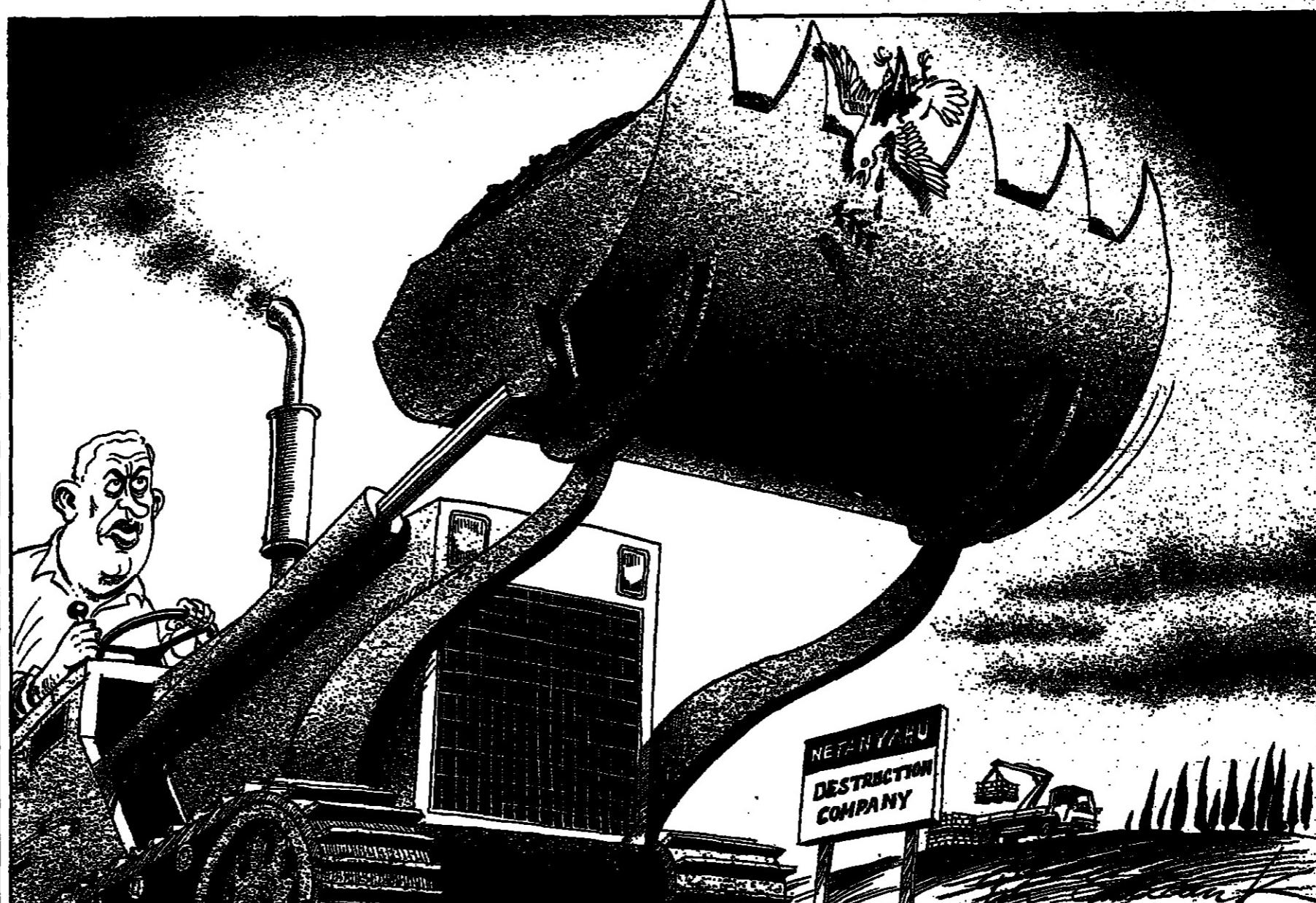
The election is very near, the die is cast and once again we are told the country wants change. All we urge our daughter to do is think how costly and extravagant a gesture change for the sake of it can be.

The unions are hovering in the wings but will soon claim centre stage. Today, with much of their power curbed, they seem docile and compliant pussy-cats – but striped leopards don't exist, and Labour's fairy tale will have no happy ending.

GRAHAM AND ELEANOR WRIGHT
Newtown, Powys

Sir: I am sorry to see that Mr Major loathes what we are doing in Camden Council ("Morale-raising pep talk sends troops to battle", 20 March). I just wonder what it is that he loathes.

Is it, perhaps, the quality of our services, which have received three Chartermarks from his own Cabinet Office? Is it the quality of our education, which shows far better results than Tory Wandsworth or Tory Westminster? Is it our Regeneration Strategy.



which has won £50m of government money and has been commended by his own government office for London?

Is it our housing programme, which has been commended consistently by its Department of the Environment? Is it our work on cutting crime, where our partnership with the Metropolitan Police in tackling drug dealing in King's Cross was given first place in the Metropolitan Police Annual Report?

Of course, it could be something rather different that Mr Major loathes. Perhaps it is the memory of standing in this borough as a parliamentary candidate and being soundly beaten. Or, perhaps, it is the memory of his party chairman, Brian Mawhinney, complaining that we were wasting money on a centre for women which he then discovered was sponsored by Save the Children Fund.

Councillor RICHARD ARTHUR Leader of the Council Camden London WC1

Sir: The Rules of Declaration of MPs' interests ("Sleaze report casts shadow over MPs", 21 March) require an MP for a particular constituency to declare in the register if 25 per cent or over of the election fighting fund was contributed by one individual or company. Such funds are on average about £8,000 in total.

I have made it quite clear to Sir Gordon Downey that if the Hammersmith Conservative Association received a £500 donation in 1987 – 10 years ago – that was entirely a matter for the Association. I did not know about it at the time. At every election all political parties receive funds for

elections and if Ian Greer wanted to make a donation, that is a matter for him. Furthermore, £500 is well under the 25 per cent threshold and would not have qualified for declaration in any case.

I was not elected for Hammersmith at the 1987 general election. It has been a Labour seat for over 20 years. I was subsequently elected for a different constituency, Brentford and Isleworth, five years later. At no time has my present constituency association or I received any donation of any amount from Mr Greer.

All this innuendo and "sleaze" boils down to the possibility that 10 years ago, five years before I was even an MP, someone made a donation to my constituency party that I did not know about, but which in any case was perfectly legal and legitimate and would not have required declaration even if I had become the MP. No wonder the public are confused by all this. I certainly am.

NIR JOSEPH DEVA, MP (Brentford and Isleworth, Con) London SW1

Family trains

Sir: Stephen Gray (letter, 21 March) makes a plea for family carriages on trains and Alex Galloway (20 March) suggests mobile-phone-free carriages. They will be pleased to learn that the Great Western franchise, out of Paddington to the West Country, has provided both for more than a year.

TIMOTHY SATHER
London SW13

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Mr Feign and the Hong Kong press

Sir: It was hardly surprising that your new cartoonist, Larry Feign, should make his debut on the foreign pages today with a wholesale libel on the press here which chooses not to run his "Lily Wong" strip. And naturally, he cannot resist repeating his shopworn pun on the name of my newspaper (though he treats carefully with the far more numerous Chinese-language titles).

Readers unacquainted with the hothouse media world in Hong Kong should know that Mr Feign has strong feelings about the *South China Morning Post*, which dropped "Lily Wong" almost two years ago. My predecessor was applying one of those cost-cutting exercises which hit most newspapers from time to time, and decided to concentrate on the strip.

Of course, despite the absence of evidence, nobody in their right mind could possibly believe that the decision hadn't been taken for dark political motives – an allegation which *The Independent* cheerfully retailed, again with zero evidence, when announcing that you would be running "Lily Wong".

I myself, wasn't involved in the decision to drop the strip, but I must admit that I had been taken aback by Mr Feign's drawings of Chinese with streams of spit coming from their mouth or as caricatures worthy of a 1940s Yellow Peril comic. If that's being pro-China, I can only plead guilty.

(How would you feel about a strip which showed South African blacks as fuzzy-wuzzies and witch doctors, or Israeli security police as hook-nosed shekel-counters?)

You may also understand the reaction here of local journalists, who are doing a difficult job with great professionalism, when this kind of insult is what they get in return.

JONATHAN FENBY
South Morning China Post
Hong Kong

Screening prevented nearly half the potential cases of cervical cancer in 1992.

It is true that for every woman whose life we save by detecting and treating a pre-cancerous condition that would have become cancer there are several women who are made anxious – however carefully we phrase the letter – by the news that they have abnormal results. This happens in every screening programme.

The important question – as Dr Hammond identifies – is "does the benefit in terms of lives saved outweigh the anxiety which may be caused to many women?" I believe that most women would answer with a resounding "yes".

JULIETTA PATINICK
National Co-ordinator NHS Cervical Screening Programme Sheffield

Screening much improved

Sir: Cervical screening is the best and indeed the only way of detecting pre-cancer in a woman's cervix and of providing early and potentially life-saving treatment.

I share some of Dr Phil Hammond's concerns (column, 18 March) about the way that cervical screening was introduced in the 1960s and developed over the next 20 years. Fortunately, the cervical screening programme of today is a much improved model.

In 1968, the programme was reorganised and there are now national standards which everyone who works in cervical screening must meet and a quality assurance system to make sure they do.

Since 1988 the fall in the mortality rate, which had been running at 1 or 2 per cent a year, has risen to around 7 per cent every year. And an audit by the Imperial Cancer Research Fund and the NHS programme has shown that

screening prevented nearly half the potential cases of cervical cancer in 1992.

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JULIETTA PATINICK
National Co-ordinator NHS Cervical Screening Programme Sheffield

Children's refuge must not close

Sir: It is difficult to imagine a more urgent need than an emergency refuge for abused children. The threatened closure ("Children's refuge may close", 21 March) of the London "safe home" – one of only four in the country – will leave hundreds of desperate children with nowhere to go.

The buck passing between the Department of Health and local authorities is an ignominious spectacle. They should get together and agree on joint temporary funding until the next government is elected. Then a long-term solution can be worked out.

LORD ASHLEY OF STOKE
House of Lords
London SW1

Pyramids trick

Sir: It seems very unlikely that the Egyptians would have needed to construct straight ramps to build the pyramids. ("Getting to the point: how rolling stones helped build the pyramids", 21 March) when the pyramids themselves provided ready-made ones. By using the principle of the hairpin bend to take a road up a mountain, stones could be carried spirally up the pyramid structure itself – at any gradient to suit the required load and its method of transportation. Moreover as the pyramid rose so, with very little extra effort, would this spiral ramp.

SEBASTIAN MACMILLAN
The Martin Centre for Architectural and Urban Studies
University of Cambridge

Why a hung council is a strong council

Democracy is not always best served by a big majority, says Bob Pritchard

Leicester may not have Doncaster's prestigious racecourse, but the behaviour of its Labour majority is remarkably similar. I speak from 10 years' experience as one of 16 opposition city councillors facing a 40-strong ruling group. Apart from electoral reform, the fashionable prescription is to end the abuses that we experience is elected executive mayors. That would be a mistake.

The ways things are done in Leicester is not that much different from the way they are done in Parliament. Every controversial decision is taken in a backroom by a few strong men and the occasional woman. The outcome of every committee or council "debate" is known before it starts. Worse, our professional officers are beholden to the ruling group. They do their best to implement the decisions their "cabinet" comes up with.

I am also group leader of the Liberal Democrats on Leicestershire County Council, where no party has had a majority for 16 years. This has taught me that the behaviour of the city council has little to do with the fact that it is Labour-controlled and everything to do with the fact that it is a secure minority dictatorship.

With absolute power, why exercise your mind listening to opposing views? Much easier, and more fun, to rubbish them, since it can be done with impunity. With nobody to impede you, why not cut corners and dispense with procedural niceties?

The way the county council conducts its affairs is far from perfect, but compared with the city council it is a model of democratic propriety and competence. There is no ruling group or ruling coalition. Alliances are formed issue by issue. Everything is debated and resolved in public. Committee chairs are elected at each meeting. They simply conduct its business. They cannot dictate outcomes, because they do not command a tame majority. The relationship



Women, the forgotten voters



Polly Toynbee

they pretend to. Against that are the television viewing figures: ITC research shows that women rate news and current affairs pretty low, men rate them high.

This brings us up abruptly against what has always been the difficult part of feminist theology, like Christians struggling to believe in the Trinity and the Virgin birth. Feminist theory says women are always, at all times, and in all ways better than men. End of story. We can explain away the relative shortage of great women painters, composers, leaders, mathematicians, etc., because women have always been held back. Women are no stupider when it comes to exams results: girls are doing better than boys. Women have a tendency to be nicer – not so bossy and self-important, more self-deprecating, better company, less bombastic. Mothers tend to come better out of literature and autobiography than fathers: motherhood is suffused with all the good, tender, affectionate things, while fatherhood is fraught with fear, authority, remoteness and the need to control others. But if women are so nice, that they fall through the grating when it comes to drawing up broad party policies.

Is that why women are turned off politics? It is still an activity for men, by men talking to other men. Women are the also-rans, the add-ons, the extras, the occasional bright suit in a sea of grey. While all that is true, no, I'm afraid it doesn't quite hold water, for women are not opting out and refusing to vote. If you want to see a taste of genuine, dangerous political alienation, consider the young blacks, 80 per cent of whom don't vote. No, a higher proportion of women actually bother to vote than men – and more of them choose to vote Conservative.

The gender gap in voting may not matter this time because Labour's lead is so incredibly huge. But there are plenty of Labour politicians who still doubt their luck, who cross their fingers, eschew ladders and black cats for fear that the Tories could yet be some black art pull off a miraculous revival. (I am not one of those: I know the Tories have had it.) But anxious Labour politicians would do well to start thinking harder about the women's vote. If one third of all women really have not made up their minds yet (silly moos), they could still be the ones to sweep John Major back to Downing Street. So when the real manifestos are published shortly, all parties would be well-advised to make sure child care, after-school schemes, holiday clubs and equal pay are up there in the opening paragraphs, not tucked away in some brief *esprit de l'escalier*.

Now the question for Labour's future is this: are young women harbinger of a better

With absolute power, why listen to the opposition?

between chairs and officers that I see on the city council is not possible. If chairs misuse their position, we don't elect them again.

Most elected members play a significant role because every member of a committee is important. A large proportion of them are entitled to ask for policy papers to be placed before the committees on which they sit. Most members who could be described as backbenchers choose to be; officers can give impartial advice because they are not beholden to any political group.

The difference between the two councils has nothing to do with the quality of their members – more than a quarter of the county councillors are also city councillors. We all behave completely differently on the two councils. We have no choice. It is not the people, but the structure that determines what we do and how we do it. As one former chief executive put it: "Since Leicestershire has been hung, there has been more genuine debate and more intelligent decision-making than there ever was before."

The political establishment and the media are obsessed with the need for "strong" government and "firm" leadership. The fashion for the idea of elected mayors is a reflection of this. But it is surely governments without majorities that are genuinely strong, because consensus produces legislation which sticks. It is harder to get things done, of course, but getting things right is surely more important than getting things done.

"Strong" government is government by chairman's (or elected mayor's) whim, unleashed by meaningful debate. It is a costly indulgence. It was prime-ministerial whim that gave us the poll tax, against informed advice from every constituency of opinion. It cost us dear to implement and then abandoned. The reorganisation that followed in Leicestershire was likewise imposed on us against informed opinion from all quarters, and against public opinion. How much public money has been wasted on these two intellectually bankrupt exercises in strong government?

"Gridlock is good for you," said an American commentator explaining Wall Street's surge after Clinton won again last year. It wasn't celebrating Clinton's win, he explained: it was responding to the fact that the Republicans had retained control of the House.

I pray for the day when his British counterparts learn that. Why are we so afraid of checks and balances, and label the result with pejorative words like "hung", instead of welcoming it as opening the door to democratic government?

The writer is Professor Emeritus, Leicestershire University, and Liberal Democrat group leader on Leicestershire County Council.

Mobile users retreat from Carriage G

Ann Treneman finds that silence is golden on the London-to-Cardiff line

The only thing you should be able to hear in Carriage A of the 14,000 from Paddington to Cardiff is the sound of silence. "We respectfully ask you to refrain from using a mobile phone," says the sign. In any other country, it would be ignored; in Britain, it is tantamount to the word of God.

"It really is peer pressure that enforces it. If you are in a Quiet Carriage and someone's phone does go off, people jump up and rush for the door looking extremely guilty," says a Great Western Trains spokeswoman. It was introduced – quietly – in one carriage per train a year ago, in second class, and the only complaints have been from jealous first-class passengers. Now Carriage G is phone-free as well.

Shhhh! Something is happening here. For years we have just put up with the nerds shouting into their

mobile, but the number of mobile phone users has reached critical mass. "It is just under seven million and we predict it will hit 12 million by the year 2000," says David Massey of Cellnet.

Someone had to do something. Parliament led the way, with its booklet *Regulations on Photography, Filming, Sound Recordings, Painting, Sketching and Mobile Telephones*. There may be zero tolerance on watercolours, but the dreaded ringing pocket is allowed outside the chamber, although only if an MP or peer is "discreet". Sadly, the rules are self-regulated, so we will never know the indiscretions.

Outside Westminster, things are not so fuzzy. Golf courses, theatres, hospitals and restaurants are clamping down (One-2-One has even published an *Etiquette Guide to Golf*). The mobile phone user is a borderline hate figure on most

trains – the Quiet Carriage is here to stay – and the image cannot be helped by the news that another detonation, the taxi driver, is being paid to prattle on about them.

But why – other than the fact that they are being sold by taxi drivers – do we hate the mobile phone so much? Guy Fielding of Queen Margaret College, Edinburgh, is a telephone expert and a self-confessed mobile phone user. "I do talk on railway carriages. I think that is legitimate. If I was saying the exact thing to somebody face-to-face, there would be no problem. My own view is that the reason it is irritating is that you cannot hear the other half of the conversation."

He suggests that a quieter word or two – evidently we talk twice as loudly on the phone as we do in normal conversation – might improve things, but it is probably too late for moderation to save the

day. All over Britain you can see the result of the new intolerance.

"One of the most characteristic postures of modern times is the crouching mobile telephonist, slightly stooped with a hand over an ear, struggling to hear and be heard," says Mercury's Little Black Book.

Increasingly, the place you see these creatures is doorways, jockeying for space with that other pariah, the smoker. Here, the outcasts are in charge; and perhaps that is the attraction. If so, it would answer a modern-day puzzle: why, if the number of smokers is dropping, are there always the same number of people in doorways? Are they throwing away their Marlboros only to pick up a mobile? Perhaps they are simply addicted to doorways: it certainly gives them something to shout about.

Freud and Ford: so close they're bound to Crash

As the Tory Government apparently heads helplessly along the electoral highway towards the inevitable poll-up, and the spectators hang around hoping to get some sensual pleasure out of the impact, our thoughts turn naturally away to the film *Crash* which has just been awarded a general release and is out somewhere, going along at 60mph with no signals. Is it controversial to link cars and sex? There is nothing new about the whole field of motoring psychosocial behaviour, or limn-psychology. As early as the 1920s, the novelist William Faulkner observed that many men lavished on their cars the sort of affectionate grooming that used to go on their wives, and was it not Scott Fitzgerald who observed that the two great innovators of the 20th century had almost the same name, Freud and Ford?

Yes, human behaviour is altered by the presence of cars, and a whole new branch of psychology has grown up to explore this phenomenon.

Foremost among the experts in the field is Dr Dion-Bouton, who joins us today to deal with some of the emotional inquiries which have flooded into my office over the weekend, causing tailbacks and delays which have taken days to clear up. All yours, Doc!

I gather that this film 'Crash' is about people who get some sort of sexual turn-on from watching car crashes. Well, this may well happen. I don't know. What I do know is that I have the opposite condition. By which I mean that whenever I am engaged in sexual activity, which I have to say I do not find very exciting per se, I find myself thinking of the far more arousing subject of cars and driving. Typically, when I am in bed with my girlfriend, I suddenly find myself in my imagination driving a Bentley or Jaguar at terrific speeds through rust-hut traffic, scattering everything in my passage, and I find this wonderfully voluptuous. Then, so my girlfriend tells me, I cry out something like 'Get out of the way! I'm coming through on the inside!' or 'Mind your backsides on the hard shoulder!' and of course she gets alarmed and shakes me, and I come back to my senses and I find I am not driving a car at all but just in bed with a girl. Then I get up and make a cup of tea. Is there something wrong with me?

Dr Dion-Bouton writes: Yes. I am only impressed by your failure to put two and two together. Here is a man who seems to lose interest in sex and in cars at the same time, and you are surprised? But if you take the basic premise of limn-psychology – namely that sex and cars are intimately bound together – then there can be no surprise at all.

If what you say about sex and cars were true, there would be some tell-tale phallic element in driving. If you can name just one, I will be convinced.

Dr Dion-Bouton writes: Phallic symbol in driving? Have you ever seen the winner of a Grand Prix take a bottle of champagne and shake it till it emits froth?

I am convinced.

Dr Dion-Bouton will be back again soon, if he drives carefully.



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Footsie stages a retreat on election jitters and interest rate worries

Only one week of the hustings and already the contention that the election is factored into share prices is being challenged.

Equities fell each day last week with Footsie recording a near 170-point fall and the supporting FTSE 250 index losing 143. The retreat was not, of course, entirely due to the Major/Blair confrontation. Interest rates were a strong influence.

Speculation rates will go up in the US this week and soon after polling day there will be a savage hike here is hardly calculated to inspire confidence.

It would be easy to blame the prospect of dearer money for the decline. There does, however, appear to be evidence that election jitters are starting to hamper the stock market.

The number of bargains completed in the last five trading days was intriguingly high, and share turnover was also eye-catching.

It was the result of election worries and tax considerations. Stockbrokers reported a tendency, certainly among private investors, to lock in profits after the long bull, ignoring possible tax bills.

But with the financial year drawing to a close many private investors are inclined to look at their capital gains situation, making the necessary adjustments to their portfolios to make sure they get the £6,300 exemption.

Such activity is good for stockbrokers' bank balances but normally has little impact on the market's level.

More important to its performance is the actions of institutional investors. They indulge in bed and breakfast trades and around this time of year are known to undertake a little portfolio window dressing which often creates distortions.

With such activity occurring under the shadow of what is likely to be a dirty, vitriolic

election campaign, the market is clearly set for a difficult time over the next two weeks.

And then the new tax year is likely to start with the market facing more pressures. There is a grave danger the knock-about political confrontations will unsettle foreign investors. If they should take flight, talk of a Footsie correction to 3,800 could be too cautious.

There are also the problems being encountered over the Crest computerised settlement system. Some private client stockbrokers claim it is too slow, forcing staff to remain at their desks late in the evening. The so-called "residual stocks" – those which for one reason or another are not on Crest – will be defined next month. So dealing in out-of-the-way shares may become even more difficult.

Crest argues its performance has improved, with 80 per cent of deals settled on the intended day, similar to the old system.

Alliance and Leicester Building Society could also present difficulties when it arrives next month (deals are expected to start on 21 April).

The building society, to be followed later this year by the likes of Halifax, Woolwich and Norwich Union, has arranged an intriguing dealing service to smooth its arrival with blue-blooded stockbroker Cazenove.

Its members who wish to sell shares have been offered a free dealing service. If they notify their selling intention by 11 April their shares will be parcellled by Caz and sold by auction; the first occurring on the Friday before dealings start.

Members who use this service will collect the average

price obtained through the auctions and any other related Caz sales.

Alliance & Leicester qualifies for Footsie membership, causing yet another adjustment. The composition of the blue-chip index may have to be re-examined once the other mutuals arrive to prevent it being hopelessly distorted by financial shares.

There is a strong flow of profits this week despite the Easter holiday. The building industry takes pride of place with an array of building material, construction and property groups reporting.

Top of the list are Blue Circle Industries, Caradon and Redland. Others reporting include Travis Perkins, Taylor Woodrow, Barratt Developments and Stobart Estates.

Their combined results should underline the building revival. BCT is likely to produce an 11 per cent profits gain to £303m and Caradon should

show it has overcome its problems with a 16 per cent gain to £175m.

But Redland will not join the Easter parade. The group recently suffered the indignity of losing its Footsie status as its shares, riding at 634p in the winter of 1994, fell to 328.5p. They closed last week at 360.5p.

Overseas influences have hit the group. Nat West Securities analyst Andy Bell says the volume across Europe was poor in Redland's last quarter. The group also suffered losses in its French aggregates business and problems in the German housing market.

He predicts a profit fall from £355.1m to £252m with a unchanged 16.7p/year dividend.

There has been talk Redland has turned to arrest the decline through a demerger or takeover strike. But any action could be a long way off.

Inchcape, the international trading group, is another on the

profits list. It too, has suffered a sharp share fall, also giving up Footsie membership. The price reached a 630p peak in early 1993; last week it was 255.5p.

Reasons for the decline, say Nigel Utley and Tony Shepard at Greig Middleton, include lack of focus and an uncompetitive product range due to the strength of the Japanese yen. "These appear to have been either addressed by the new management team or reversed in the market." The Greig men look for a modest profit recovery, from £146.8m to £158.5m.

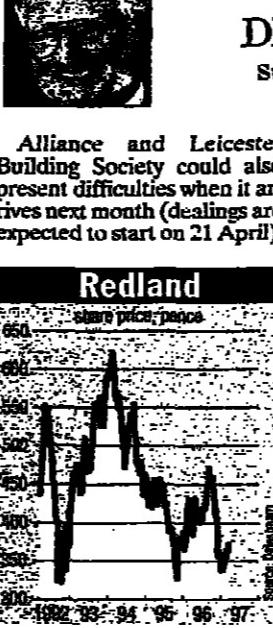
The shares of the two laggards are not short of supporters. Mr Bell believes Redland is a buy and Messrs Utley and Shepard take the view Inchcape offers a 75p upside.

Others with results include fashion retailer Next (£160m against £125.3m) and P&O (£290m compared with £30.1m).

STOCK MARKET WEEK

DEREK PAIN

Stock market reporter of the year



Redland
Price/Capitalisation Ratio

Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items.

Other details: *Ex rights; †Ex dividend; #All or Unlisted Securities Market; \$Suspended; **Partly Paid; **Paid Shares; ^AM Stock

Source: FT Information

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UK Company News 01 Bulletin Report 05 Water Shares 39

Foreign Exchange 02 Wall St Report 20 Electricity Shares 40

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Interest Rates

UK	Stock	Price	Cap	Yield	P/E	Index
Bank						
Alcohol						
Banks, Merchant						
Banks, Retail						
Breweries, Pubs & Restaurants						
Building/Construction						
Chemical						
Electronics						
Engineering						
Extractive Industries						
Diversified Industries						
Food						
Food Manufacturers						
Gas						
Gas Exploration						
Gas Utilities						
Health Care						
Household Goods						
Investment Companies						
Leisure & Hotels						
Manufacturing						
Media						
Pharmaceuticals						
Property						
Print & Paper						
Retailers, Food						
Retailers, General						
Textiles & Apparel						
Tobaccos						
Transport						
Utilities						
Wider						
Support Services						

Interest rates are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items.

Other details: *Ex rights; †Ex dividend; #All or Unlisted Securities Market; \$Suspended;

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Anglian takes legal action in Brazil

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

Anglian Water, one of Britain's largest privatised water companies, is taking legal action in Brazil after running into problems on a high-profile joint venture involving its international arm. A company employee based in Brazil has returned to Britain and is understood to be on "garden leave".

The embarrassing disclosure casts doubt on the company's rush to cash in on the \$40bn privatisation of the Brazilian water industry.

The venture Anglian is involved in is a £30m project to

build water treatment plants in the south of Brazil.

According to reports circulating in the industry, Anglian paid up to £12m into the bank account of an individual in Brazil and is now trying to recover the money.

A spokesman for Anglian said the group was "not aware" of any cash disappearing, but confirmed it was taking legal action in Brazil.

He said it involved a joint venture with a small civil engineering company, Cejen, in which Anglian's subsidiary, Anglian Water International (AWI), had invested £10m to take a near 40 per cent stake.

The spokesman added:

Water company runs into problems with £30m joint venture to build sewerage treatment plants

"There were some legal discrepancies but they are currently being resolved by our legal advisers."

He refused to discuss the precise nature of the action, or whether it involved company funds.

The Anglian employee who was working in Brazil, Peter Cashen, refused to comment when contacted at his Northamptonshire home, saying: "I am bound by confidentiality agreements. You will have to talk to Anglian."

The spokesman also declined

to comment on Mr Cashen's role. "We don't discuss individual employees as a matter of company policy."

There is no suggestion that Mr Cashen or Cejen were involved in the disappearance of any money.

The Anglian employee was singled out in Anglian's last annual report as an example of its Brazilian ambitions. However, one senior water industry figure in Brazil said there were rumours that the partnership with Cejen had ended and that the official opening ceremony of the

treatment works had been postponed. It proved impossible to contact Cejen at its offices in the city of Curitiba, in the southern state of Santa Catarina.

The company spokesman denied that the venture itself had become bogged down.

"We have invested £10m in a sewerage treatment plant. It's been built and we are now getting revenue from the treatment works. It is up and running."

Anglian also denied that another exploratory joint-venture in Rio de Janeiro had been

dissolved. AWI formed a company called Brazilian Water Works to bid for a £200m privatisation contract to provide water and sewerage services to one of the city's richest areas.

This company is unconnected with project which is the subject of the legal action.

The partnership was with a Singaporean civil engineering company, IPCO, which was represented in Brazil by an independent consultant called Milton Mederos.

Speaking at his Miami home, Mr Mederos said he was no longer involved in the venture. Brazilian Water Works' rented office in Rio has also closed.

Anglian's spokesman insisted:

"The Brazilian Water Works company is still in existence."

Brazil has proved problematic for other UK water companies. Yorkshire Water has pulled out of a joint venture in Rio with a US construction group, though in a further twist its former partner is still using the Yorkshire name.

In addition, North West Water, part of United Utilities, is thought to be unlikely to press ahead with a planned venture in Rio, according to Brazilian experts. North West's representative in Brazil said no firm decisions had been taken.

Anglian created AWI in the stampede for overseas business after privatisation.



Losses for AWI are not separately disclosed, though documents filed with Companies House show that in the year to the end of March 1996 it lost £3.8m, up from £3.4m the year before, on turnover of just £23.986.

Bank to tighten up on risk rating

John Willcock

The Bank of England will publish far-reaching proposals today to improve its supervision of British banks following recent scandals such as the collapse of Barings. The consultative paper proposes a much more interventionist and formal approach to rating risk inside banks, backed by the threat of increased capital adequacy ratios for banks that fail to comply.

The move comes hard on the heels of the Bank's warning that the bonus culture in investment banks is tempting dealers to take greater risks.

The proposals have taken a year to prepare and are based on a concept called the Rate framework. This will include a new formal risk assessment for most banks, which will be prepared on an annual basis and will concentrate on identifying which area of each bank is most at risk. In this way the Bank hopes to concentrate its supervisory resources most effectively.

Michael Foot, the successor to Brian Quinn as the Bank's director in charge of banking supervision, said the proposals dovetailed with what other regulators were doing. The Securities and Futures Authority (SFA) already has the ability to require errant institutions to boost their proportion of capital against liabilities.

Mr Foot said: "Regulatory cooperation has expanded enormously in the UK. The Bank co-operated closely with the SFA over the collapse of Barings. The conversion of so many building societies to bank status this year has meant we have had to work very closely with the Building Societies Commission and recent problems in the asset management industry have meant working alongside Imro."

Asked whether such measures would have prevented the collapse of Barings, Mr Foot said: "This system would have warned us earlier that the asset management and securities side was becoming more important [to Barings]. Mr Foot

said the rising exposure at Barings' futures operation in Singapore would have set off alarm bells as early as 1993 if Rate had been in place.

A prototype of the Rate process will be tested on up to 20 UK banks this year. The Bank will then turn to the thorny issue of supervising overseas banks with operations in the UK in the summer.

Mr Foot admitted the Bank's more intrusive role was worrying a lot of banks. "They are very concerned that this might be the thin end of a very long wedge. We will be having seminars with banks on these proposals in early May. It's all part of the new glassos."

The Rate system will assess the business risk facing a bank using five factors: collectively known as Camel: capital, assets, market risk, earnings and liabilities. Much of the system is based on research done for the Bank last year by accountants Arthur Andersen which concluded the Bank needed to take on an extra 100 staff.

Fund manager attacks boardroom practices

Michael Harrison and Patrick Tooher

One of Britain's biggest fund managers yesterday launched an attack on the widespread boardroom practice of chief executives stepping up to become chairmen without a break in between.

Hermes, which has £32bn of funds under management, has taken the highly unusual step of writing to the heads of Britain's top 100 companies, saying it is opposed to the practice. The only exceptions, it says, are where one of the independent non-executives is made deputy chairman or a senior non-executive director is nominated.

The appointment of a chief executive to the chairmanship is a familiar step in British boardrooms. Companies whose present chairman is a former chief executive include Glaxo, Sainsbury, Enterprise Oil,

Lloyds Bank, Grand Metropolitan and ICI, where Sir Ronnie Hampel, head of the Hampel Committee on Corporate Governance, made just such a move two years ago.

An ICI spokesman said that even though it did not have a deputy chairman, its board did contain a number of very senior and independent-minded non-execs including George Simpson, the managing director of GEC, Sir Roger Hurn, the chairman of Smiths Industries, and Sir Anthony Pilkington, Pilkington's former chairman.

At Grand Metropolitan both Lord Sheppard and George Bull, his successor, have moved seamlessly from being chief executive to chairman of the food and drink conglomerate.

Hermes' statement on corporate governance and voting policies says that although little change is needed to the current

regime, there are elements of the Cadbury and Greenbury codes which have "not yet been fully worked out in practice".

"This is the first time we have written to company chairmen setting out our overall policies and we are confident that general adherence to these principles will improve the long-term performance of UK plc," said Alastair Ross Gooley, Hermes' chief executive.

Hermes also wants newly appointed non-executives to attend "appropriate seminars" and urges experienced non-executives to help out in "development workshops".

Over three years all directors should be subject to re-election at least once, with at least one new independent non-executive introduced. If non-executive directors continue to serve for more than 10 years they will not be considered independent.

British business 'badly prepared' for introduction of euro

Yvette Cooper

British business is badly prepared for a single currency, and could lose out as a result, irrespective of whether or not sterling is in the first wave, two reports warn today.

According to one of them, produced by a group of Britain's top finance directors, fewer

than one in five companies has a strategy in place for dealing with economic and monetary union.

The report by the Hundred Group, which represents the finance directors of Britain's biggest companies, says business needs to prepare urgently for the development of a large European capital market that

could offer a cheaper and more liquid form of long-term finance. Banks also need to position themselves to offer a pan-European service and the changes in cash handling systems that will result from the introduction of the euro.

Meanwhile, a survey of 250 European company directors, commissioned by information

technology consultancy ECsoft, found British companies lagging behind in the IT changes needed to cope with the euro. It said that 17 per cent of British companies questioned were planning EMU-related investment in IT, compared with 56 per cent of German firms.

Brian Birkenhead, chairman of the Hundred Group, said: "British business has a lot of work to do regardless of whether the UK is in or out of a single currency."

would be ill advised to assume it will not," he said.

Even if the UK does not join the single currency, the Hundred Group warns that Britain's continuing commitment to the single market will require careful management to avoid jeopardising the UK's EU trading links.

Gavin Davies, page 21

MAIN PRICE CHANGES

	Prices ↑	Prices ↓	Index ↑	Index ↓			
Wilson(C) Hicles	155	29.9	22.2	Danks Bus Sys.	502.5	122.5	19.6
Pizza Express	767.5	101.5	15.2	French	635	137	17.7
Wet Group	242	22	10	Pace Micro Tech	78.5	15.5	16.5

Source: FT Information

CURRENCIES

	Weeks Chg	Yr Ago			Weeks Chg	Yr Ago		
\$ (London)	1.6538	+0.29c	1.5348		E (London)	0.6235	-0.11	0.6516
\$ (New York)	1.6635	+0.30c	1.5365		E (New York)	0.6236	-0.08	0.6508
DM (London)	2.6997	-0.06d	2.2693		DM (London)	1.6334	-1.59p	1.6753
£ (London)	196.347	-1.180	163.832		£ (London)	122.430	-0.955	106.745
E Index	96.7	-0.5	83.9		E Index	104.0	-0.3	98.8

OTHER INDICATORS

	Weeks Chg	Yr Ago			Weeks Chg	Yr Ago	
Oil Brent S	20.18	+0.17	19.62	RPI	155.0	2.7146	16.16
Gold S	351.75	-1.2	397.70	GDP	109.7	+2.6pc	107.0
Gold £	219.32	-1.15	259.12	Basis Rates	-	6.00pc	6.75

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back page: the week starts here

IN THE INDEPENDENT THIS WEEK



George Grosz:
Savage satirist of post-war Germany



Leonardo di Caprio
A Romeo to die for.
New film, new fame, interview



Roseanne Cash
Singer who wanted to write

plus
Don Was,
Suzanne Vega

A Brit crop?

Oscars: The Academy Awards Ceremony opens its doors to give us the annual, ample glimpse into Tinseltown. This year could be special. *The English Patient* has 12 nominations, Mike Leigh's *Secrets & Lies* follows closely behind. Watch Ralph Fiennes from *The English Patient* beat off Tom Cruise (*Jerry Maguire*) for best actor and Emily Watson from *Breaking the Waves* win with Best Actress. Live on BBC2 with Barry Norman, 2.6am. Highlights 10-12pm BBC1, Tuesday.

Virtual sport

Exhibition: The Science of Sport at London's Science Museum – an introduction to the role that science and technology is playing in our sporting life. From Friday it will be open to the public to experience the simulated thrill of Grand Prix racing, or the desperate emotion of a penalty shoot-out à la Gareth Southgate, using audiovisual equipment.

10am-6pm. £8.95 adults, £3.20 children, concs £2. 0990 661 030 (+75p booking fee)

Pitching up

Film: New Lad icons will be up for the film premier of Nick Hornby's soccer saga *Fever Pitch* on Wednesday. Expect to see the Arsenal team, David Baddiel, Martin Clunes, and the stars Colin Firth and Ruth Gemmell. Has anyone done more for the gentrification of soccer than the Arsenal-obsessed Hornby? UCI Empire, Leicester Square, 7.30pm. General release: 4 April.

Film talk: Get steamed up over a new version of *The Railway Children* at London's Barbican Cinema on Wednesday. You can meet the stars – Bernard Cribbins, Jenny Agutter and the director Lionel Jeffries. (Wed only, then opens nationwide on the 28th): Adults £20, children £12

Toughs at the top
TV: There are three footballing legends who make our current crop seem like lads in the park. In a three-part series starting on Easter Friday and running over the weekend, Hugh McIlvanney looks at *The Football Men* – Matt Busby, Jack Stein and Bill Shankly. As his brother, the novelist William McIlvanney, says: "These men brought from their backgrounds an instant ability to command respect. You knew these were people not to mess around with". BBC2 9.30pm

More TV: Channel 5 arrives on Sunday (5pm), though not for those yet to tuned into this brave new view.

Let's twist again
Fun: A massive 'Twister-thon' to celebrate the 30th birthday of this limb-tangling

WHERE TO GO, WHAT TO SEE, WHAT TO DO

game (five million sold to date and many a party entwined by the colour-dotted plastic sheets) is taking place in London's Broadgate on Tuesday. One-time world champion Rick Bumey takes on the equally famous, evil Twister Man Tim 'Iron Spider' Maguire. 12pm

Egging on

Easter: Country houses are scattering eggs all over their gardens in an attempt to draw the crowds. At Appuldurcombe House on the Isle of Wight on Sunday, thousands of eggs will be hidden in the lawns and foliage of the 11-acre grounds. From 10am. Adults £2, children £1, concs. £1.50. 01883 852484. At Carlisle Castle on Sunday there will be luxury

"medieval" eggs decorated with heraldic and Celtic-influenced designs made from almond pasta. Ends 31 March. £2.70 (adults), £2 (concs), £1.40 (children). 01228 591992

Blues bother

Sport: The end could be nigh for Cambridge's

recent domination of the Boat Race. For once, the crews are mostly culled from within the limits of these shores. The Cambridge crew, at 6ft 5½", will be the tallest in the event's history. Start 4pm. Putney to Mortlake.

Best of Britten

Music: The 4th annual Aldeburgh early music festival takes place on the 27th and has rapidly built on the status conferred on the town by Britten back in the Fifties. At the Snape Maltings Concert Hall. Ends 31 March. Concert on 28th is sold out. £4-£14. 01728 452835.

Circle in round

Installation: The celebrated American choreographer William Forsythe has created a vast new piece of installation art, *Tight Roaring Circle*, at the Roundhouse in London's Camden, in collaboration with Dana Casperson. They specialize in integrating language, architecture and technology, and both have been involved in ballet work. Chalk Farm Road, 5-9pm, weekends 3pm-8pm. Opens Wednesdays 27 April. £4.50, concs £2.50. 0171 336 6803

Revue: Then Again at the Lyric Hammersmith on Thursday promises to be simply wonderful, darling, with writers such as Julian Clary and Harold Pinter and performers including Dawn French and Sheila Hancock. 7.30pm (except 27th: 7pm). Sat mat 2.30pm. £10-15 (sold out all Mon/Fri w/e) 0181-741 2311

At last ...
It's British Summer Time on Sunday, with clocks to be put forward one hour from London's Camden Palace tomorrow night, 8pm. £3. 0171 387 0428

Rock 'n roll
Pop: The Greatest 70's Rock Show Ever – although you don't have to believe everything you read in the publicity – begins a two-month tour with those matey greats, Showaddywaddy, and the heroically ubiquitous *Alvin Stardust*, above. Tonight: Plymouth Pavilions. 7.30. 01752 229922. £9.50-£13.50. Nationwide to 19 April.

Goodrich Castle, Hereford and Worcester, stages a folk festival on Sunday and Monday with bagpipes to the fore. From midday, £2.30 adults, £1.20 children, £1.70 concs. Under-fives free. 01600 890538.

Or you could try and be a bit more up-to-date by going to see the new band *Spacemaid*, tipped to be the next big thing – by 'Q' magazine amongst others – with their collection of catchy tunes and semi-punk sound at London's Camden Palace tomorrow night, 8pm. £3. 0171 387 0428



Whatever you are doing this week, you would do better in Dubai. Whatever the weather, Dubai will be warmer, whatever food and drink you will get. Dubai's is richer, rarer, more abundant. If you are going to a party in England, eat your heart out: Dubai parties are grander, more lavish, they have mass bands and stars who shine resplendent, like the desert sky.

The Maktoum family, hell bent on turning their patch of Emirate sand into a tourist resort and world-class venue for thoroughbred racing are hosts to Saturday's 10-furlong international, with more than £1m to the winner.

To persuade the best horses and their owner, trainer and jockey to go nowhere else at the weekend, the Dubai package includes free transport for selected horses, first-class air fare, hotel suites, stretch limousines and every little thing to make "connections" happy.

I was invited last year to ensure favourable media coverage, hacks were treated to a week of milk and honey, with long-distance phone calls, dry-cleaning, vintage champagne for breakfast and massage sessions in the health club thrown in.

Why, then, am I sitting in the dining-room of a hotel near Dublin, wondering whether they have microwaved the egg, bacon, sausage and tomato, and would I have been better off with a kipper?

I was not asked to Dubai this year. That's why, in thanking my hosts for last year's extravagance, I referred to the visit as "the mother of all freebies".

Rather as my erstwhile colleagues at Westminster would have told me, "when there is bounty to be had, grab hold of it and keep your mouth shut".

In 1996, Sheikh Mohammed's nightmare scenario had been success for his own horse, a Maktoum one, two and three would have finished off Dubai's ambitions to attract the best horses in the universe to run in the world's richest race. As it was, the Californian *Cigar* won: two American horses followed him home and the Sheikh beamed. This meeting will run and run.

If you want to bet on Saturday's race, it might be wise to ignore anything from Europe (turf horses have difficulties with the triangular track and the soft dirt surface), but the Japanese *Hokuto Vega* at 33-1 represents fair each-way value.

The publication of useless statistics is with us once more and will flourish as readers search for subject matters away from politics. From a psychological magazine: "In an average week the average man now has a 60 per cent likelihood of having a below average time." From *Pets and Pet Owners*: "A recent survey shows that out of 100 blind men who ask people to direct them, three-quarters of those they approach lean down and give instructions to the guide dog."

From the *Aer Lingus* in-flight magazine, an in-depth piece on cabbages states: "The real monstrosity of the cabbages' cussed nature is not just the stink, but the fact that the more you cook it, the more the stench increases. The amount of hydrogen sulphide produced in boiled cabbage doubles between the 5th and 7th minute of cooking."

On the subject of gastronomy, in which cabbage cooked for seven minutes plays no part. Dublin food seems tired where London's sparkles. Dublin is still into garnishes of limp lettuce and wilting shrimp. The plates are too hot, the coffee too weak, the wine waiter too grand. At the Bon Appetit in Malahide they serve mashed potatoes into which strips of bacon and fresh herbs sizzled in olive oil are incorporated: a really good dish, pity about the tartlet base.

Do not miss McIlvanney on *Busby, Stein and Shankly* (see left) and as you watch, shed a tear for the supporters of the many journeymen football clubs whose supporters don't have a lot to remember and hardly anything to look forward to. The economics of today's professional game mean that if a club has a centrally situated ground, a good manager or a good team, some or all of these are sold, for insufficient money to replace any of the three assets.

Plymouth Argyle, from whom we expected so much, are a case in point. A crowd of 5,468 saw them beaten at home, which put paid to lingering hopes of finishing in the top half of their modest division, which might have enabled them to change their strip and merchandise their way out of trouble.

Beryl Cooke lives in Plymouth; she is even richer than Della Smith, who lives in East Anglia and became a director of Norwich. Cooke should buy Home Park.

A poem – perhaps for *'Readers Digest'*: There was a young man from Peru Whose hummocks stopped at his two.

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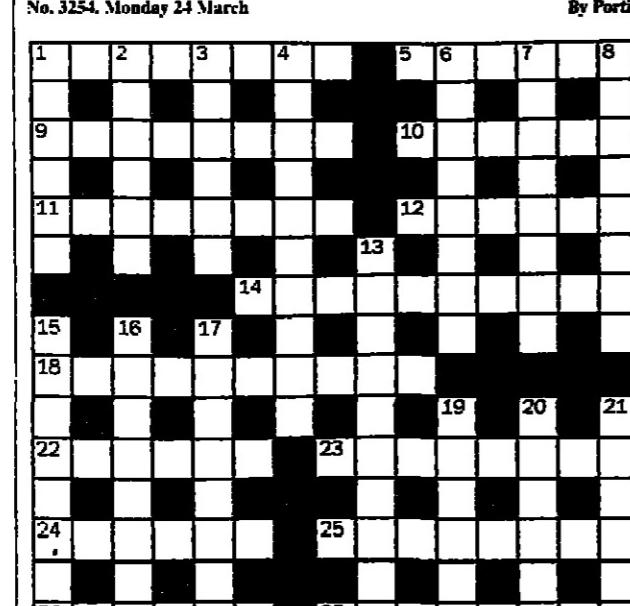
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THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3254, Monday 24 March

By Portia



- ACROSS
1 Go through the motions to celebrate occasion (4)
5 Foreign money order is irregular (6)
9 Whole point of blood-thirsty myth (8)
10 Tracks down rumour in seconds (6)
11 Way of travelling round? (4,4)
12 Sounds like a decent business (6)
14 Pull a heavy weight with a (2,4)
- DOWN
1 Lacking only silver lining (6)
2 Sorry about length of judgement (6)
3 Follow alternative East Indian poet (6)
4 Commercial centre I am left to sort out (10)
6 Note detail on back of craft object (8)
7 Pole abandons dog in Adriatic region (8)
8 Wrong impression? (8)
13 Be without new training vessel (10)
15 Trespass around separate area of grass (8)
16 Writing about border plant (8)
17 Compare with three-quarters finished portrait (8)
19 Man on American island (6)
20 In favour of admitting popular English dramatist (6)
21 Fond of present (6)

kind of engine (10)
18 Banter from attendant about dud rifles (10)
22 Artist comes from N.E. Yorkshire (6)
23 One's certain to be replaced almost immediately (2,1,5)
24 Independent doctor's inside information on girl (6)
25 Area that's well-covered?

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